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MEMORIALS

OF

METHODISM IN VIRGINIA,

FROM ITS INTRODUCTION INTO THE STATE,
IN THE YEAR 1772, TO THE YEAR 1829.

BY THE

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Dedication.

TO THE MEMBERS

OF THE

VIRGINIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE M. E. CHURCH, SOUTH.

This Record

OF THE LABORS OF

THE FATHERS

WHO PLANTED METHODISM IN VIRGINIA,

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY THEIR FELLOW-LABORER,

THE AUTHOR

PREFACE.

Soon after the writer of this volume entered the ministry, now above twenty-five years, he conceived the purpose of writing a history of Methodism in Virginia. The field was large, and its exploration vastly more difficult than youthful ardor had imagined. But it was extremely inviting, and promised a rich reward to patient research. The main difficulty lay in the collection of suitable materials. These reposed in the memoirs of the older ministers and members, or were scattered through the Journals of Asbury and the detached writings of his contemporaries and successors.

To the applications made to those who were familiar with the early history of our Church in Virginia, he received the most favorable responses, and to these contributions the author is indebted for many of the most interesting incidents in this volume. Most fortunately, the family of Rev. Stith Mead placed in his hands the manuscript Journal of that eminently useful man, extending through a period of nearly forty years. This was found to contain a record of facts in connection with early Methodism of the greatest value, besides copies of documents of an official character that had escaped the notice of every other writer. This Journal was destroyed, with the library of the author, in the great fire at Richmond in April, 1865.

The Journals of the Virginia Conference, which were kindly placed in his hands for examination by the accomplished Secretaries, were of much service, and enabled him to trace the progress of Conference business from the earliest and simplest forms, which proved sufficient for our fathers, to the more elaborate and complex methods of our times.

The constant aim of the author has been to give a faithful record of the movement of Methodism in the State from its earliest period, to the date at which the volume closes. The critical reader will find many departures from exact rules, but he must bear in mind that Methodism, like every other system, has passed through formative stages, each of which has been marked by measures which to us appear anomalous, but were, in fact, the best and wisest that could have been adopted under existing circumstances.

The work has been carried forward in the midst of the daily engagements of the regular pastorate, and though nearly completed before the outbreak of the late civil war, it has since been revised with care. It is now sent forth with the earnest prayer that it may contribute to the spiritual well-being of those who sit peacefully under their own "vines and fig trees," in the fields won by the heroic deeds of the early Methodist preachers.

W. W. B.

Ashland, Va., 1870.

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MEMORIALS

OF

METHODISM IN VIRGINIA.

CHAPTER I.

Settlement at Jamestown. Rev. Robert Hunt, chaplain of the Colony. First place of worship. Sufferings of the colonists. Arrival of Lord De La War. Rev. Mr. Bucke—re-opening of the Church—description of the service. Rev. Messrs. Whittaker, Glover and Wickham. Settlements in the Colony. Founding of a college for the education of the Indians. Massacre of the colonists in 1622. Assembly of 1624—laws in reference to religious matters. Strict enforcement of the Act of Uniformity. Appearance of Puritan preachers in the Colony—their expulsion by act of Assembly. Laws against the Quakers. Low state of religion—action of the vestries. Charter of William and Mary College. Introduction of Presbyterianism. Francis Makemie. The Great Awakening. Whitefield in Virginia. Samuel Morris—effect of his "readings." William Robinson, John Blair, John Roan, William Tennent. Whitefield again in Virginia. Samuel Davies—his labors. Baptists in Virginia. Persecutions against them. Rapid increase of Dissenters. Whitefield's preaching. Growing dislike to the Established Church. Bill for Religious Freedom. Great struggle over it in the Assembly. Its final passage.

ON the 13th day of May, 1607, the first permanent settlement on the soil of Virginia, was made at Jamestown. The colonists brought with them the forms and ceremonies of the Church of England. They regarded their enterprise as a work, which,

under the providence of God, might tend "to the glory of his Divine Majesty and the propagating of the Christian religion." Their chaplain was the Rev. Robert Hunt, an exemplary and pious man, whom they loved and venerated. Wingfield, the first president of the Colony, speaks of him as "a man not any waie to be touched with the humour of a papist spirit, nor blemished with the least suspicion of a factous schismatic." He had been instrumental in suppressing a mutiny while the little fleet lay for six weeks on the English coast, baffled by adverse winds, and he was equally successful in settling the disputes that arose among the chief men, in the infancy of the colony.

The first place of worship at Jamestown was of the rudest sort, and not unlike the arrangements of a camp-meeting. Captain John Smith thus describes it: "We did hang an awning (which is an old sail) to three or four trees, to shadow us from the sun; our walls were rails of wood, our seats unhewed trees, till we cut planks; our pulpit a bar of wood nailed to two neighbouring trees; in foul weather we shifted into an old rotten tent."

Such was their church, till, through the exertions of Hunt, they "built a homely thing like a barn, set upon crotchetts, covered with rafts, sedge and earth, so was also the walls."

"The best of our houses," says Smith, "were of the like curiosity, but the most part far much worse workmanship, that could neither well defend wind nor rain."

They had morning and evening service daily, two sermons on the Sabbath, "and every three months, the holy communion." Such was the practice while Hunt lived; after his death they still had daily prayers, and a homily read by some competent person, on the Sabbath. It is uncertain when Mr. Hunt died. Dr. Hawkes supposes that he lived long enough to perform the first marriage ceremony in Virginia, in 1608; he died probably the same year. His zeal, devotion, and courage are fully endorsed by an early writer. During a fire, that destroyed nearly the whole of Jamestown, "the minister, Hunt, lost all his library, and all that he had, but the clothes on his back; yet none ever heard him repine at his loss. Upon any alarm, he was as ready for defence as any, and till he could not speak, he never ceased to his utmost to animate us constantly to persist; whose soul, questionless, is with God."

Captain Smith's eulogy is not less complete. He speaks of him as, "an honest, religious and courageous divine, during whose life our factions were oft qualified, our wants and greatest extremities so comforted that they seemed easy in comparison of what we endured after his memorable death."

The colony was without a minister until 1610, when the Rev. Mr. Bucke came over with the new Governor, Lord De la War. When this expedition reached Jamestown, the colony was in a wretched condition; many had been slain by the Indians, and the few that remained were at the point of starvation. The church bell was rung, "and such as were able to crawl out

of their miserable dwellings, repaired thither to join in the zealous and sorrowful prayer of their faithful minister, who pleaded in that solemn hour for his afflicted brethren and himself before the Lord their God."

The stock of provisions being exhausted, the colony resolved to seek a refuge in Newfoundland. As they were sailing down the river "with sorrowful hearts," they met the fleet of Lord De la War coming up "with provision and comforts of all kinds." All returned joyfully to Jamestown. On landing, the Governor "fell down on his knees, and in the presence of all the people made a long and silent prayer."

When he arose, the whole company moved in procession to the church, and heard a sermon from the new minister. At the close of the discourse, Lord De la War read his credentials, and made an encouraging address to the people.

Never was an arrival more opportune. The colonists were reduced to the last extremity. The record of their sufferings almost exceeds belief. "So great was our famine," says one of the historians, "that a savage we slew and buried, the poorer sort took him up again and eat him, and so did divers one another, boiled and stewed with roots and herbs. And one of the rest did kill his wife, powdered her, and had eaten part of her before it was known, for which he was executed, as he well deserved."

Lord De la War at once gave orders for the repairing of the church. It was sixty feet long, by twenty-four wide, its chancel was of cedar, the communion

table black walnut; all the pews were of cedar, "with fair, broad windows, to shut and open, of the same wood." The pulpit was of the same material, "with a font hewn below like a canoe." The church was very light within; it had two bells at the west end. By order of the "Lord-Governor it was kept passing sweet, and trimmed up with divers flowers." They had two sermons on Sunday, and one on Thursday; there being two preachers, who held service by turns. "Every morning at the ringing of the bell about ten o'clock, each man addresseth himself to prayers, and so at four o'clock, before supper."

On Sunday the Governor went to church in great state. He was "accompanied by all the counsellors, captains, and other officers, and all the gentlemen, with a guard of Halberdiers, in his lordship's livery, fair red cloakes, to the number of fifty, on each side and behind him."

His lordship sat in the choir, "in a great velvet chair;" a cloth was spread before him, and on this was placed a velvet cushion, on which he kneeled. On either side were the officers of his household, each in his place. At the close of the service he marched back in the same manner.

The next minister that came over was Alexander Whitaker. He was no obscure adventurer. His father, the Rev. William Whitaker, was Master of Saint John's College, Cambridge, and Regius Professor of Divinity. He was one of the ablest theological writers of his day. His son was a graduate of

Cambridge, and held a living in the North of England, where he was greatly esteemed.

"He, without any persuasion but God and his own heart, did voluntarily leave his *warm nest*, and to the wonder of his kindred and amazement of them that knew him, undertook this hard but heroical resolution to go to Virginia, and help to bear the name of God to the Gentiles."

In the same year, Rev. Mr. Glover came over. He was also a graduate of Cambridge, and had held a good position as a preacher in England. Reaching the country in the sickly season, he soon died.

Whitaker was the minister at "New Bermuda," now Bermuda Hundred; he also preached at Henrico City, six miles above, on the opposite side of the river.

It is supposed that he officiated at the marriage of John Rolfe and Pocahontas.

In an interesting historical paper, found in the British Museum, entitled, "John Rolf's Relation of the State of Virginia, 17th century," and supposed to have been written in 1616, we have an account of the settlements in the Colony at that date.

At Henrico City, the farthest inland settlement, there were thirty-eight men and boys, twenty-two of these were farmers, the rest officers and others; "all whom maintayne themselves with food and apparell."

William Wickham was the minister, probably Mr. Whitaker's curate. He was a man "who in his life and doctrine, gave good examples and godly instructions

to the people." At Bermuda Nether Hundred there were one hundred and nineteen settlers. Whitaker, "a good divine," had the ministerial charge here. At West and Shirley Hundred, on the north side of the river, three or four miles below Bermuda, there were twenty-five colonists employed in the cultivation of tobacco. At Jamestown there were fifty, of whom thirty-one were farmers; "all theis maintayne themselves with food and rayment." Richard Burd was the minister, "a verie good preacher."

At Kequoughtan, (Hampton) not far from the mouth of the river, there were twenty settlers, eleven were farmers. William Mays was their minister.

There was a fishing station called Dale's Gift, on the ocean, near Cape Charles; seventeen men were there stationed, whose "labor was to make salt and catch fish." The population at this period amounted to three hundred and fifty-one.

A college for the education of the Indians was founded at Henrico City, and some native children were placed under instruction. The company in England granted 15,000 acres of land lying between Henrico and Richmond, for the support of the church and the college. The East India school, preparatory to the college, was also established in Charles City, and both were in a fair way to be permanently endowed by liberal contributions in England; but a direful calamity ruined all these plans. On Friday the 22nd of March, 1622, the Indians massacred one-twelfth of all the inhabitants of the colony. At noon the savages, "rising suddenly and everywhere at the same

time, butchered the colonists with their own implements, sparing neither age, nor sex, nor condition." In a few hours three hundred men, women and children had fallen. "The infuriated savages wreaked their vengeance even on the dead, dragging and mangling the lifeless bodies, smearing their hands in blood and bearing off the torn and yet palpitaing limbs as trophies of a brutal triumph." This horrible slaughter struck such a panic into the hearts of the remaining settlers, that they seriously contemplated seeking a refuge on the Eastern shore, thus putting the Bay between themselves and the bloodthirsty savages.

But after more mature deliberation this plan was abandoned, and the people were withdrawn from the defenceless plantations, and concentrated in a few well fortified places.

In the month of March 1624, an Assembly was held whose records have been preserved. The action of previous Assemblies in reference to religious matters is not recorded, but from subsequent allusions it appears that the ministers were allowed "ten pounds of tobacco and a bushel of corn per poll, provided the whole allowance did not exceed fifteen hundred pounds of tobacco, and sixteen barrels of corn."

The acts of 1624 were very stringent in regard to church duties. Provision was to be made in every plantation for a house or a room sequestered for the worship of God, and not to be used for any temporal purpose, "and a place empaled in for the buryal of the dead."

Whoever absented himself from "divine service

any Sunday without an allowable excuse," was fined one pound of tobacco; if he absented himself a month, he was fined fifty pounds.

Conformity "to the canons in England" was enjoined, and all persons commanded to "yield readie obedience to them under paine of censure."

A minister absent from his charge "above two months in all the yeare," forfeited "halfe his means;" if absent above four months, he forfeited "his whole means and cure."

No man was allowed to sell any of his tobacco until the minister was satisfied, under the penalty of forfeiting "double his part of the minister's means;" one man was appointed in every plantation to collect the parson's portion, out of "the first and best tobacco."

In 1632 the laws were revised. The act of uniformity was reënacted, differing in words, but remaining the same in spirit. The non-attendance penalty was now made "one shillinge for every tyme of any persons' absence from church, having no lawfull or reasonable excuse to bee absent."

The ministers were required to preach at least one sermon every Sunday—"having no lawful impediment." It was also made their duty to catechise the congregation every Sabbath "halfe an houre or more before evening prayer." It was ordered that "all preachinge, administeringe of the communion, baptizinge of children, and marriages, shall be done in the church except in cases of necessitie."

Ministerial character must have been at a heavy

discount in the Colony at that period, as the following Act will attest:

"Ministers shall not give themselves to excess in drinking or ryott, spending their tyme idelie by day or by night, playinge at dice, cards and other unlawful game, but at all times convenient they shall heare or reade somewhat of the Holy Scripture, or shall occupie themselves with some other honest studies, or exercise, always doinge the things which shall appertayne to honestie, and endeavour to profit the Church of God, havinge alwayes in mynd that they ought to excell all others in puritie of life, and should be examples to the people, to live well and Christianlie."

We may fain hope that all the clergy were not included in this dark picture; but that the majority were "blind leaders of the blind" can hardly be doubted by any one acquainted with our colonial history. The Assembly feeling the need of spiritual guides, "began to provide and send home for gospel ministers, and largely contributed for their maintenance; but Virginia savouring not handsomely in England, very few of good conversation would adventure thither (as thinking it a place wherein surely the fear of God was not) yet many came such as wore black coats and could babble in a pulpit, roar in a tavern, exact from their parishioners, and rather by their dissoluteness destroy than feed their flocks." These statements should, perhaps, be taken with some allowance. The planters were generally remiss in the erection of churches and in supporting the clergy; many of them were vicious and profligate, caring for none of these things

and dishonoring religion in the sight of the heathen among whom they lived.

In 1642 the Act of uniformity was made more stringent. It was enacted, in order to preserve "the puritie of doctrine and the unitie of the church, that all ministers whatsoever, which shall reside in the colony are to be conformable to the orders and constitution of the Church of England, and the laws therein established, and not otherwise to be admitted to teach or preach publicly or privately." The Governor and counsel were directed to enforce the law rigidly against "all non-conformists, compelling them to depart the colony with all convenience."

It is supposed that this severe measure was directed against the Puritans, who about this time began to make some stir in Virginia.

"In the year 1641," says Cotton Mather, "one Mr. Bennet, a gentleman from Virginia, arrived at Boston, with letters from well-disposed persons there, unto the ministers of New England, bewailing their sad condition, for the want of the glorious gospel, and entreating that they might hence be supplied with ministers of that gospel." This call was responded to by the New England churches, and three missionaries were sent "unto a people that sat in the region and shadow of death." On reaching the province they found "little encouragement from the rulers of the place, but they had a kind entertainment with the people; and in the several parts of the country where they were bestowed, there were many persons brought home to God."

"But," says good Cotton Mather' "as Austin told mankind, the devil was never turned Christian yet; the powers of darkness could not count it for their interest that the light of the gospel powerfully preached should reach these dark places of the earth." By the Act of uniformity the Puritan preachers "were driven away from the Virginia coast." They had gathered several congregations during their brief sojourn, and, though silenced by the Assembly, they taught all who resorted to them in private houses. In 1648, the Puritans were numerous in the Colony. The most flourishing congregation, numbering one hundred and eighteen, was in Nansemond county, under the care of Rev. Mr. Harrison. He was soon driven from the Colony, and afterward became greatly useful in England and Ireland. It is said that one of his banished elders, a Mr. Durand, retired to North Carolina, and settled in that part of the State, now called Durand's, or Durant's Neck. Nothing more was heard of Puritan preachers in Virginia, until the Protectorate of Cromwell.

In 1656, it was declared by the Assembly, that "many congregations in this Colony are destitute of ministers whereby religion and devotion cannot but suffer much impairment and delay." They invited preachers to come over and offered a bonus of twenty pounds sterling, or two thousand pounds of tobacco, to any "person or persons" that should transport a "sufficient minister" into the colony. These efforts to secure good ministers were partially successful; some zealous and useful men came over to labor in

the destitute field. This same year it was enacted that all "countys not yet laid off into parishes, shall be divided into parishes;" all "tithable persons" were assessed fifteen pounds of tobacco yearly; this was to go towards building a parish church and purchasing a glebe and stock, for the next minister that should be settled there.

In 1662, uniformity in worship was a prominent part of legislation. The vestrymen when inducted into office, took the oath of allegiance to the King and formally subscribed to the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England. No minister was allowed to officiate without proof that he had been ordained by an English bishop, and any one violating this rule, was to be expelled the Colony. All absentees from church service on Sundays, and the four holidays, were fined fifty pounds of tobacco. Persons who refused to have their children baptized were fined two thousand pounds of tobacco; "halfe to the informer, halfe to the publique."

In 1671, Governor Berkley in answering the question from the Mother Country, "What course is taken about instructing the people within your government in the Christian religion?" says, "We have forty-eight parishes, and our ministers are well paid, and by my consent should be better *if they would pray oftener and preach less.* But of all other commodities, so of this, *the worst are sent to us,* and we had few that we could boast of since the persecution in Cromwell's tyranny drove divers worthy men hither." This is a sad picture of the condition of the Virginia clergy.

It could hardly be expected that proper discipline should be maintained in a religious establishment, the executive officers of which resided on the opposite side of the Atlantic Ocean. Many cases of clerical delinquency required immediate attention, and the Church suffered all the consequences of their neglect.

In the strong opposition to non-conformists by the zealous churchmen of Virginia, the Quakers came in for their full share of proscription and persecution. They were described by legislative authority as an "unreasonable and turbulent sort of people, who, contrary to the laws, daily gathered assemblies and congregations of people, teaching and publishing lies, miracles, false visions, prophecies, and doctrines tending to destroy religion, laws, communities, and all the bonds of civil society." Captains of vessels were forbidden to bring a Quaker into the colony under a penalty of one hundred pounds sterling. All Quakers were arrested and imprisoned without bail till they abjured the country, or gave security to depart with all speed from the Colony and return no more. If a Quaker came back he was punished and sent away; if he returned again he was dealt with as a felon. All persons were forbidden on their peril to publish or distribute their writings; and whoever entertained them or allowed their assemblies in his house, was fined one hundred pounds sterling. For a month's absence from the church service, they were fined twenty pounds sterling, and when taken by the officers in "unlawful assemblies and conventicles," they were fined two hundred pounds of tobacco; and

in case any were too poor to pay the fine, the more able were compelled to pay for them in addition to their own penalty.

But these laws were found insufficient to suppress the hated sect. In 1663, they were subjected to still heavier penalties. If five or more, from the age of sixteen upwards, assembled for religious purposes, they were fined for the first offence two hundred pounds of tobacco; for the second, five hundred pounds; for the third, they were banished. The penalty for bringing a Quaker into the Colony was increased, and all persons forbidden to entertain them, "to teach or preach," under a penalty of five thousand pounds of tobacco.

These severe laws were enforced with a strong hand. John Porter, a member of the house of Burgesses, from Norfolk county, was charged with being "loving to the Quakers," and "against the baptizing of children;" he admitted the fact, refused to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, which were tendered as tests, and was expelled from the House. The arm of the law was stretched out against others besides the Puritans and the Quakers. One Henry Coleman was excommunicated forty days, "for using scornful speeches, and putting on his hat in church, when, according to *an order of the court*, he was to acknowledge and ask forgiveness for an offence." In 1630, one Thomas Tindall was "pillory'd two hours for giving my Lord Baltimore the lie, and threatening to knock him down." Another person lost his office and was

fined for speaking against the laws of the Assembly and those who made them.

Religion was not improved by these severities. The account given by the Rev. Morgan Godwyn in 1675 of the condition of the parishes is truly deplorable. The ministers were "most miserably handled by their plebeian juntos, the vestries." The "hiring" of parsons, as it was called, was left wholly to them. In many instances they resolved either to have no ministers at all, or to reduce them to their own terms. They used them as they pleased, paid them what they pleased, and discarded them when they pleased.

"Two-thirds of the preachers were made up of leaden lay priests of the vestry's ordination; and were both the shame and grief of the rightly ordained clergy." Under the operation of a law, which declared that any person who permitted himself to be brought over free of charge, should be bound to four years, servitude, some of the ministers, being ignorant of this law, were actually held to service by those who had gratuitously transported them from England.

From this bondage they could only be free by paying five or six times the amount of their passage money. The parishes are described as being from sixty to seventy miles in length, and many were allowed to be void for many years, to save the expense of an incumbent. "Layman were allowed to usurp the office of ministers, and deacons to undermine and thrust out presbyters; all things concerning the church and religion were left to the mercy of the people."

To attempt to christianize the Indians, a cherished object with many good men in England, was regarded as utterly idle and ridiculous. The statements of Mr. Godwyn are confirmed by a statistical account of Virginia in 1681, submitted by Governor Culpeper to the English Colonial Committee. The great majority of the people were professedly members of the Church of England. Three or four Quaker congregations, and one Presbyterian, constituted the only dissenters.

There were fifty parishes unequally and inconveniently divided, with two or three churches or chapels in each. The Governor held the reins in every thing. Ministers were to produce proof before him that they had been episcopally ordained. By law the right of presentation was in the vestry, but the custom of hiring the clergy by the year generally prevailed, so that presentations rarely occurred. The natural result was, that worthy ministers either would not come to the Colony, or if they did, they were soon driven away by the harsh treatment of the vestrymen. Those that remained were mere tenants at sufferance, and had to be careful how they preached against any cherished vice of a great man of the vestry, lest they should be turned out of their living at the end of the year. There were not more than half as many preachers as parishes at this time. Their yearly salary was sixteen thousand pounds of tobacco.

The Bishop of London had episcopal jurisdiction in all matters except marriage licenses, probates of wills, and induction of ministers; these rights were

reserved to the Governor. A resident commissary visited the parishes, and overlooked the clergy.

In 1692 the charter of William and Mary College was secured by the zealous exertions of Rev. James Blair, who then filled the office of Commissary for Virginia. The King gave two thousand pounds toward the erection of proper buildings; twenty thousand acres of land were granted in Pamunky Neck as an endowment, and the College was further assisted by a tax of one penny a pound on all tobacco sent from Virginia and Maryland to other Colonies, and afterwards by a duty on skins and furs. The objects of the founders were, to furnish a seminary for ministers of the gospel, to educate young men piously in good letters and manners, and to propagate the Christian faith among the Indians; a special professorship for this latter named purpose was endowed and annexed by the celebrated Robert Boyle.

In 1700, a Commencement was held at the College. A large crowd attended. Planters came in coaches; others in vessels from New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland, "it being a new thing in that part of America to hear graduates perform their exercises." Not a few Indians were attracted to the place by the novelty of the occasion.

At this period there were thirty-four parishes supplied with ministers; fifteen were vacant. Each parish had a church of wood, brick or stone; the larger ones had one or two chapels. The whole population was about sixty thousand, with only seventy preaching places. There was a parsonage house in each

parish, with two hundred and fifty acres of land attached, and in the wealthier parishes, a few slaves, or a limited stock of cattle. The allowance was still sixteen thousand pounds of tobacco; if common, equal to eighty pounds sterling; if of the best sweet-scented, equal to one hundred and sixty pounds sterling. The labor of twelve slaves was required to produce tobacco enough to pay one clergyman.

In this enumeration of the Virginia parishes should be included perhaps the Huguenot settlement at Manakintown, on James river, though it is stated, "that they conducted their public worship after the Genevan forms, and repeated family worship three times a day." From these persecuted Protestants have sprung some of th best families in the State.

About this time the Presbyterians began to make some stir in the lower part of the State.

Francis Makemie was the first preacher "on the Geneva model," that made his residence in Virginia. He had preached in Barbadoes, and in Maryland, and settled it is supposed in Accomac county previous to the year, 1699. He was licensed as a preacher under the Act of Toleration in 1699, and at the same time two houses owned by him, one "at Acconiack town," the other "at Pocomoke," were licensed as places for public worship. There was also a small congregation on the Elizabeth river near Norfolk. Beverly, in his "History of Virginia," published in 1705, speak-of dissenters, says, "They have no more than five Conventicles among them, namely, three small meetings of Quakers, and two of Presbyterians." He further

adds: "'Tis observed that those counties where Presbyterian meetings are, produce very mean tobacco, and for that reason can't get an orthodox minister to stay among them; but whenever they could, the people very orderly went to church."

So it seems the rule was, good tobacco, orthodox preaching; bad tobacco, Presbyterian or Quaker preaching, or none at all. In 1710 the Presbytery of Philadelphia, wrote to that of Dublin: "In all Virginia we have one small congregation on Elizabeth River, and some few families favoring our way in Rappahannock and York."

Makemie, after several years of faithful and successful ministerial labor, died in 1708.

The Act of Toleration gave but little relief to the few dissenters in Virginia. They were exempt from a fine of five shillings imposed on all persons who failed to attend the church service once in two months, "provided they should attend any congregation, or place of religious worship, permitted and allowed by the said act of parliament, once in two months." Of this law it has been well said: "It is surely an abuse of terms to call a law, a toleration act, which imposes a religious test on the conscience, in order to avoid the penalties of another law equally violating every principle of religious freedom. Nothing could be more intolerant, than to impose the penalties by this act prescribed for not repairing to church, and then hold out the idea of exemption, by compliance with the provisions of such a law as the statute of I. William and Mary, adopted by a mere general reference, when not

one person in a thousand could possibly know its contents." But it must be borne in mind that this "was an age when the state of religion was low in England, and of those ministers sent over to Virginia, not a few were incompetent, some openly profligate; and religion slumbered in the lagoon of moral lectures, the maxims of Socrates and Seneca, and the stereotyped routine of accustomed forms." Disputes between the preachers and the people were frequent; "the parson was a favorite butt for aristocratic ridicule." Not unfrequently the more faithful and exemplary pastors were ejected from mercenary motives, or on account of their stern denunciation of popular sins; the worthless were left undisturbed by public indifference.

The self-perpetuated vestries were "the parsons' masters," and ruled their clerical slaves with a high hand. In vain the ministers deplored their scanty and uncertain livings. The Commissary could do nothing. The few powers he possessed were disputed. He was the shadow of a bishop, without the right to ordain, or confirm, or depose a minister. And yet this poor apology for a bishop was watched with suspicion by a people that dreaded ecclesiastical tyranny. The Church in Virginia was without order or discipline, and held in her own bosom the elements of her subsequent overthrow.

With the death of Francis Makemie, Presbyterianism almost disappeared from Virginia. For thirty years "not one flourishing congregation could be found, nor one active minister lived in her borders."

Then came the Scotch-Irish emigration, which planted the Genevan forms in the Valley and other portions of the State, where it has maintained its hold to this day.

Meanwhile, the "Great Awakening" began in the Northern States under the preaching of the Tennents, Rowland, Dickinson and Frelinghuysen in New Jersey, and Jonathan Edwards in New England. It spread rapidly through a portion of Pennsylvania, reached Virginia, and took hold of the hearts of the people without the ordinary means of public preaching.

Whitefield was in this country during the height of the revival, and entered into the work with all the ardor of his great soul. Wherever he appeared vast congregations thronged to hear him. He made nothing of travelling two hundred miles and preaching sixteen sermons in a week. Physical effects occurred under the sermons of Rowland, not unlike those under the preaching of the Wesleyans in England. The hearers often fainted away, and numbers were borne from the churches in a state of insensibility.

In the winter of 1740, Whitefield, on his way to Georgia, preached at Williamsburg. He was kindly received by the Governor, and the Commissary, Mr. Blair. Could he have remained a short time in the State, his eloquence, unlike any thing ever heard before by the people, would have made a profound impression, and greatly contributed to the religious excitement which had already seized the public mind.

A few years after this date, a little band of Dissenters in Hanover, led by Samuel Morris, began to

assemble at his house for divine worship. Morris was a plain, earnest, devout man, by trade, a bricklayer. He obtained from a young Scotchman a volume of Whitefield's sermons, taken in short hand while he preached at Glasgow. The plainness and fervency of these discourses made a deep impression on his mind; he invited his neighbors to come and hear him read them; they came, and while he read, many were convinced of sin. Thus, while Whitefield was passing in a flame of revival along the sea-board, an obscure bricklayer in the woods of Hanover, was reading to weeping sinners the burning words that fell from his lips in Scotland. Had he known this, how eagerly would he have come and taught them the way of the Lord more perfectly. Morris read to his rustic congregation from other books, such as "Boston's Twofold State," "Luther on Galatians," and his "Table Talk." Under this simple means the concern of some was so great that they wept bitterly and cried out for mercy. The excitement spread through the settlements; his house was too small to hold the crowds that flocked to his reading, and they determined to build a house "merely for *reading*," for none of them had yet attempted even public prayer. It was called "Morris' Reading House," and is forever connected with the history of Presbyterianism in Virginia. Reports spread far and wide of the scenes at the "Reading House," and Morris was invited to read his good books in various places; thus the work spread with power through that portion of the country where the people had sunk into a cold and heartless formality.

Their absence from the parish churches was at length noticed, and they were called upon by the court to give their reasons for it. They were also required to declare what "denomination they were of." This they found it difficult to do, for they knew little of any Dissenters except the Quakers.

At length, remembering that Luther was a great reformer, and that his writings had been of special benefit to them, they declared themselves Lutherans. But they soon took another name. One of their company on a journey was driven by a violent storm to take refuge in the house of a very poor man by the roadside. While there his eye caught an old volume lying on a dusty shelf; he took it down, and on reading it, found that it expressed his own religious sentiments in the most precise terms. He offered to buy the book, but the man gave it to him. Summoned to appear before the Governor as a "malignant cabal," the leading men took the old book with them to Williamsburg, and, after close examination of its doctrines, they unanimously agreed that it expressed their faith, and resolved to present it to the Governor as containing their religious creed. Governor Gooch at once declared them to be Presbyterians, as the volume was the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. They were at once recognised as a part of the Established Church of the English realm.

Their first preacher was William Robinson. He came as an evangelist from the New Castle Presbytery in the winter of 1742-43. He spent the winter among the Presbyterian settlers in North Carolina

In the spring he returned to Virginia, and made a preaching tour through Charlotte, Prince Edward, Campbell, and Albemarle counties. In July he appeared in Hanover. The "Reading House" being too small to hold a third of the people, he took his stand under a wide-spreading oak and preached to a vast assembly; four days he continued to preach, and each day the crowd increased. The effect was great. Morris and his friends were in transports as the "warm-hearted preacher poured into their ears and hearts the solemn truths of the Gospel." Many that came through curiosity were cut to the heart; but few seemed unaffected, and numbers returned to their homes, "anxiously inquiring what they should do to be saved." His appointments compelled him to leave. The people, grateful for his service, raised a considerable sum of money and offered it to him; he declined it; they insisted; but he still refused. His generous friends were not to be baffled; they found out where he would spend his last night in the county, and gave the money to the gentleman of the house, who privately placed it in his saddle-bags. In the morning, as he was taking leave, his saddle-bags were handed him; suspecting an artifice, he opened them, and behold! the money was in the sack's mouth. He told them he would take the money, not for his own use, but to be devoted to the education of a poor young man of promise and piety, who was then studying for the ministry. "As soon as he is licensed," said Robinson, "we will send him to visit you; you may now be educating a minister for yourselves." This young man was Samuel Davies. Rob-

inson kept his promise, but did not live to see his anticipation realized. In 1746 he died; the next year Davies was preaching in Hanover. Robinson was followed by Rev. John Blair; he remained but a short time, yet his preaching was powerfully felt. Morris says: "He came to us in the fullness of the gospel of Christ." Under his sermon one night, "a whole houseful of people was quite overcome with the power of the word, particularly of one pungent sentence." They could hardly sit or stand or keep their feelings under proper restraint. After him came Rev. John Roan; he staid longer than Blair, and his preaching was attended with happy results. He promoted religion in places where there was little or none before: this, with the severity of his censures on the degenerate clergy, gave alarm, and measures were concerted to suppress the Presbyterian meetings. Roan, nothing daunted, hurled his denunciations at the profligate clergymen. He was a fiery preacher, and the crowd followed him, some from concern, more from curiosity; they greatly enjoyed the excoriation he gave the parsons. Reports soon reached Williamsburg that one Roan in Hanover was turning the world upside down. Charges were alleged against him of blasphemy and slander. "A perfidious wretch deposed that he had heard Mr. Roan utter blasphemous expressions in his sermons."

The result was that John Roan was presented by the Grand Jury "for reflecting upon and villifying the Established Religion in divers sermons." Roan left the State before the court met at which the charge had been given, and returned to Pennsylvania. Wil-

liam Tennent and Samuel Blair followed Mr. Roan, and preached with signal success. A sacramental occasion during their stay is spoken of as a most gracious season. "It appeared as one of the days of the Son of Man; and we could hardly help wishing we could with Joshua have delayed the revolution of the heavens to prolong it."

In 1744 or '45, Whitefield was again in Virginia. He visited the churches in Hanover, but scarcely a trace of his labors has been preserved. Morris says: "Mr. Whitefield came and preached four or five days, which was the happy means of giving us further encouragement, and of engaging others to the Lord, especially amongst the church people, who received the gospel more readily from him, than from ministers of the Presbyterian denomination."

In 1747, Samuel Davies appeared with a license from the General Court of Virginia to officiate "in and about Hanover, at four meeting-houses." His coming was hailed with great joy. "'Twas like a visit from the angel of mercy." While the people rejoiced, a sore affliction fell on their minister. His wife was snatched away by death, his own health failed, and he lingered for a time on the verge of the grave. But he stood at his post, preaching by day, and at night tossing on his bed with delirium, the watchers fearing he would not live till morning. At length his health began to improve, and he determined to accept the Hanover call. He could not be idle; he hardly hoped to live long, and he burned to "carry with him to heaven some gems for the eternal crown." His preaching was greatly blessed; the people rode

from every quarter to hear the young preacher. Invitations poured in upon him to preach at various points beyond his regular field. Petitions were laid before the General Court, and granted, for the opening of other houses of worship for the Dissenters. Some of his preaching places were twelve or fifteen miles apart, others thirty, forty, and sixty. A great stir was made by churchmen in opposition to Davies, and strong efforts put forth to suppress his meetings in different sections. The question of licensing additional preaching houses, was brought to a legal test; the young divine boldly and firmly maintained his rights under the Act of Toleration, though he stood face to face against the learned Attorney General, Peyton Randolph. The lawyers complimented him on his defence, and he was sustained by the Governor and a majority of the Council. In 1751, there were three hundred white communicants in his congregation, besides a number of negroes. He baptized forty of the latter upon a profession of their faith.

Davies felt a deep interest in the slaves, and embraced every opportunity for giving them religious instruction. He says, in 1755: "The number of slaves that attend my ministry at particular times is about three hundred." He was always affected when he looked on so many black faces eagerly attentive to every word, and often bathed in tears. Many by dint of application had learned to read plain books, and they eagerly sought at his house bibles and little religious books that had been sent out to him from England. They were specially fond of the Psalms and Hymns. Sometimes they lodged in his kitchen,

and made the night vocal with their lusty songs. "When I would wake," says Davies, "about two or three o'clock in the morning, a torrent of sacred harmony poured into my chamber and carried my mind away to heaven."

A little more than ten years he labored in Virginia. In 1758, on the death of President Edwards, he was called to the presidency of Princeton College. He entered with zeal upon his new work, and under his wise plans, the College sprung forward with renewed vigor. His work here was soon finished. On the first of January 1761, his New Year's sermon was from the text, "This year thou shalt die." On the fourth of February he was in Heaven. Over his coffin stood his aged mother; gazing at his corpse a few moments in silence, she said: "There is the son of my prayers and my hopes—my only son—my only earthly supporter. But there is the will of God, and I am satisfied." He died at the early age of thirty-seven.

As early as 1714, it is supposed there was a congregation of Baptists in Isle of Wight county. They came from England. For many years this sect made but little progress.

In 1743, several Baptist families settled in Berkeley county and organized a church. From this as a center they spread on both sides of the Blue Ridge. David Thomas was the chief instrument in planting churches in this section of the State. The denomination rapidly increased, and in 1770, there were regular Baptist Churches through all the Northern Neck above Fredericksburg. Their preachers were plain,

unlearned men, "characterized by an impassioned manner, vehement gesticulation, and a singular tone of voice." The hearers under preaching "often gave way to tears, trembling, screams, and acclamations." The preachers were often insulted and abused by the populace; some were imprisoned; but persecution only increased their zeal and extended their influence. They sang hymns on their way to jail, and preached to the crowd through the grated windows. In Spotsylvania, in January 1768, John Waller, Lewis Craig, James Childs, and others, were arrested and taken before three magistrates, who stood in the meeting-house yard. They were bound in a penalty of one thousand pounds to appear two days after at court and answer charges. When the day arrived, they were arraigned as disturbers of the peace. "These men," said the prosecuting attorney, "are great disturbers of the peace; they cannot meet a man on the road, but they must ram a text of Scripture down his throat." The court was sorely puzzled by the preachers, who made their own defence. They offered to let them go if they would consent not to preach in the county for a year and a day. They refused, and went to jail. As they walked through the streets of Fredericksburg to the prison, they sang,

> "Broad is the road that leads to death,
> And thousands walk together there."

Craig lay in jail four weeks; Waller and the rest forty-three days, and were then unconditionally released. They preached every day from the jail windows, and many heard to the saving of their souls. It appears that these ministers had a second

trial. Patrick Henry rode fifty miles to attend it. He volunteered to defend them, and made an overwhelming appeal in behalf of religious freedom. He rose sublimely in the greatness of his theme. "These men," said he, "are charged with—with—what?" Then in low, measured tones he continued, "preaching the Gospel of the Son of God." He paused, waved the indictment round his head; the silence was painful. Then lifting his hands and eyes to heaven, he exclaimed, "Great God!" The audience responded by a burst of feeling. The great orator went on with irresistible eloquence, ever and anon waving the indictment round his head, and piercing the conscience of the court with dagger-like questions, till at length he exclaimed in a tone of thunder, his eagle eye fixed upon the court, "What laws have they violated?" The excitement had reached its flood. The King's attorney shook with agitation. The court was deeply moved. The presiding justice exclaimed, "Sheriff, discharge those men."

The persecuted Baptists brought their case to the notice of the Deputy Governor, John Blair. He wrote to the King's attorney of Spotsylvania that he should not "molest these conscientious people so long as they behave themselves in a manner becoming pious christians, and in obedience to the laws, till the court, when they intend to apply for license, and when the gentlemen who complain may make their objections and be heard." After receiving this letter, the attorney "would have nothing more to say in the affair."

The "Separate Baptists," as they were called from having left the Established Church, appeared about

the year 1754. They were most numerous in the southern tier of counties. Their most famous preacher was Samuel Harris. He traversed a great part of the eastern division of the State, and preached with great success. He founded the first Separate Baptist Church in upper Spotsylvania in 1767.

In a few years, this sect had planted churches from the Blue Ridge to the Bay shore, north and south of James River.

The hand of persecution was felt most heavily by the Separate Baptists, who for several reasons failed to secure licenses for their meeting-houses, as did the Regular Baptists. David Tinsley, one of their preachers, was confined in Chesterfield jail, and in several other counties their ministers languished in prison. The Church, in the midst of these troubles, resolved to hold a public fast day, "in behalf of their poor blind persecutors, and for the releasement of their brethren."

From this period, 1768, to the breaking out of the Revolution, Dissenters rapidly increased in the Colony. The discussion that followed the passage of the "Two Penny Act," brought the clergy of the Establishment into disrepute in all those parishes where they opposed it. In the memorable trial in Hanover, in which the great question at issue between the planters and the parsons was tried, the eloquence of the youthful Henry overwhelmingly defeated the church party, and gave a fresh impulse to religious freedom. In the same year of this trial, 1763, Whitefield was again in Virginia. His labors during this visit seem to have been confined chiefly to the Northern Neck.

James Waddell, afterward celebrated as the blind preacher of Wirt's "British Spy," was the Presbyterian minister in that portion of the State. Whitefield's first sermon was from the text: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." It was a most affecting appeal to a vast concourse of people. Again he preached to a crowded house from the words: "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut." They carried their dinners with them to this meeting, "much to the satisfaction of Mr. Whitefield." During his stay he purchased a "chair-horse" from one Mr. Selden, with which on trial he was much pleased. Several interesting reminiscences of this visit have been handed down. He is described as very neat in his dress, cheerful in the social circle, and extremely fond of children. He agreeably entertained his friends with a history of his narrow escapes from mobs while preaching in England. A lady, who was very young at the time, used to tell how he would catch her on his lap, saying: "Come here, my little girl," raising his wig and taking her hand, "here, put your finger in that gash, there is where the brick-bat hit me."

Perhaps of this journey he wrote when he reached Philadelphia, "all along from Charleston to this place, the cry is, for Christ's sake stay and preach to us! O, for a thousand lives to spend for Jesus!"

While the Dissenters were zealously laboring to spread their tenets through the State, the intolerance of the reigning sect displayed itself in continued per-

secutions. In a letter written in 1774, Madison, then a young man, thus refers to the condition of things in his vicinity: "Poverty and luxury prevail among all sects; pride, ignorance and knavery among the priesthood, and vice and wickedness among the laity. This is bad enough; but it is not the worst I have to tell you. That diabolical, hell-conceived principle of persecution rages among some; and to their eternal infamy, the clergy furnish their quota of imps for such purposes. There are at this time in the adjacent county not less than five or six well-meaning men in close jail for publishing their religious sentiments, which, in the main, are very orthodox." He further says: "I have neither patience to hear, talk, or think of any thing relative to this matter; for I have squabbled and scolded, abused and ridiculed so long about it to so little purpose, that I am without common patience. So I must beg you to pity me, and pray for liberty of conscience to all."

So great and vital were the questions of religious freedom and the separation of Church and State, in the opinion of this great man, that he gives it as his firm belief that, "If the Church of England had been the established and general religion in all the Northern Colonies, as it has been among us here, and uninterrupted harmony had prevailed throughout the Continent, it is clear to me that slavery and subjection might have been, and would have been, gradually insinuated among us. Union of religious sentiment begets a surprising confidence, and ecclesiastical establishments tend to great ignorance and corruption, all of which facilitate the execution of mischiev-

ous projects." It is but simple justice to add here the explanation of this opinion given by Madison's biographer, Mr. Rives: "It was the union of religious sentiment, made binding by force of law, which Madison deprecated as hostile to liberty. The history of our Revolutionary struggle in Virginia shows that there was nothing in the Church establishment, as such, that was essentially dangerous to liberty. To the honor of Virginia, be it said, that she was 'the nursery of liberty in the New World.' Among the vestrymen of the Church in those early times are many names afterwards illustrious in the annals of our Revolutionary struggle; names of men who pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to the cause of human freedom throughout the world."

The tide was setting in strongly against the Establishment; public opinion was being shaped by such leaders as Jefferson and Madison. The day was swiftly coming when the high claims of the Church must give way before reason and common sense. By the time the war broke out, it is supposed that two-thirds of the people in the State favored the Dissenters. Still they were compelled by law to pay tithes to support the Church clergy. This grievous wrong was loudly complained of, without any hope of redress, under the rule of the mother country. The first Republican Legislature was crowded with petitions for the abolition of Church rates. The House was divided. The Church party was led by such men as Edmund Pendleton and Robert Carter Nicholas; the liberal party by Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Mason. The conflict lasted almost daily

for two months, and then the liberals only secured the repeal of the laws "which rendered criminal the maintenance of any religious opinions, the forbearance of repairing to Church or the exercise of any mode of worship; to exempt Dissenters from contributions to the support of the Established Church, and to suppress only until the next session, levies on the members of that Church for the salaries of their own incumbents."

The Church party carried a resolution "that religious assemblies ought to be regulated, and that provision ought to be made for continuing the succession of the clergy, and superintending their conduct,"—and even in the bill relieving the Dissenters "was inserted an express reservation of the question, whether a general assessment should not be established by law, on every one, to the support of the pastor of his choice; or whether all should be left to voluntary contribution."

The Bill for Religious Freedom which finally passed the Assembly was the decided step towards breaking down the effete Church Establishment; and the disruption of the unholy tie between Church and State.

It sets forth in the Preamble—the freedom of the mind;—the injustice and impiety of attempting its coercion,—the presumption of fallible and uninspired men in attempting to control the faith of others—that to compel a man to support opinions that he disbelieves is sinful and tyrannical—that every man should be free to give "his contributions to the particular pastor whose morals he would make his pattern, and whose power he feels most persuasive to righteousness"—

that no man should be proscribed on account of his religious opinions—that to impose disabilities for such reason, is to encourage dishonesty and hypocrisy—that the civil magistrate can only rightly interfere when principles break out into overt acts against peace and good order;—and finally, that truth is great and will prevail—that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, which ceases to be dangerous when truth is free to combat it.

The Act declares "that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place or ministry whatever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions, or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities."

These rights were declared to be "the natural rights of mankind;" and the Assembly further declared, "that if any Act shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present, or to narrow its operation, such Act will be an infringement of natural rights." This Bill was reported to the Legislature in 1779, but did not pass. The same year the Church rates were abolished. To this there was great opposition. In 1784 an effort was made to establish a provision for teachers of the Christian Religion by a general assessment.

"This was a compulsory tax on all for the support of the clergy, but it allowed each person to decide to what denomination his contributions should go. This was the best arrangement the Anglican Church could

now hope for; and most of the Dissenters it would seem (the Baptist being the only exception as a Church) were ready to join the former on this ground and unite in a strenuous effort in favor of the measure." It must not be presumed that the Methodists are included in this remark, for they were of too little importance in the State at that date to receive much notice in connection with such matters.

A tremendous struggle followed. On one side stood James Madison, George Mason and George Nicholas, with a host of ardent and zealous reformers. On the other stood George Washington, Patrick Henry, John Marshall, and Richard Henry Lee, backed by all the clergy of the Establishment, and most of the wealthy gentry of the State. The most earnest opposition to the bill only secured a delay until the next session, on the ground of submitting the question to the people. The enemies of the measure used every effort to arouse the opposition of the people.

A powerful remonstrance against it from the able pen of Madison was freely circulated. Opposition gave way in all quarters before his unanswerable arguments. The next session showed a decided majority against the plan, and it was wholly abandoned. In 1786 Jefferson's Bill for Religious Freedom was passed. The disruption of the Church Establishment speedily followed. In 1801 an order was passed for the sale of all the glebes by the overseers of the poor as soon as vacated by existing incumbents, except those made as private donations prior to 1777. Thus was the last link broken between Church and State.

CHAPTER II.

Robert Williams. Emigration to America. Labors in New York and other places. First appearance in Virginia in 1772. His preaching at Norfolk and Portsmouth. Visits Petersburg in 1773. Gressett Davis—his letter to Mr. Wesley. First preaching place in Petersburg. Archibald McRoberts. Devereux Jarratt. State of Religion. Startling sermons of Jarratt. His faithful labors. First American Methodist Conference. First regular Circuit in Virginia. Revival, under Williams and Jarratt. Methodist church built in Petersburg. Marriage and settlement of Williams. His death. Estimate of his Character.

TO the Rev. Robert Williams belongs the honor of planting Methodism in Virginia. He was born in England, but had settled in Ireland, where he labored as a local preacher in connection with the Methodist Societies. From Mr. Wesley he received a license to preach under the authority of the regular missionaries in the American field.

He was almost as poor as his divine Master. He sold his horse to pay his debts, and sailed for the New World with an outfit consisting of a pair of saddle-bags containing a few pieces of clothing, a loaf of bread and a bottle of milk. His passage was paid by a Mr. Ashton, who came over in the same vessel. This gentleman settled in one of the Northern States, and was a firm friend of the early preachers to the end of his life. His house was always open to the weary itinerants, a prophet's room was set apart for

their special accommodation, and at his death he left "a legacy of three acres of ground for a parsonage site, a cow for the preacher, that he might never want milk, and a perpetual annuity of ten dollars to the oldest unmarried preacher of the New York Conference."

Mr. Williams landed at New York early in the fall of 1769, in advance of Messrs. Boardman and Pillmoor. He at once entered the field opened by the labors of Philip Embury. The hearts of the little band were soon after gladdened by the arrival of Mr. Boardman. We find some quaint and interesting items respecting Mr. Williams and his co-laborers in Wakeley's "Lost Chapters." This volume is based upon the records of the old John Street Society, which were happily discovered by some Methodist antiquarian after having been lost for many years. The following extract will fill a break in the brief history of Mr. Williams, and furnish a view of the Steward's office among the fathers. The account runs thus:

20 Sept. 1769.	To cash paid Mr. Jarvis for a hat for Mr. Williams,	£2. 5. 0.
22 Sept. 1769.	To cash for a book for Mr. Willams,	0. 0. 9.
9 Oct. 1769.	To cash paid Mr. Newton for three pairs of stockings for Mr. Williams and Mr. Embury,	1. 11. 9.
11 Oct. 1769.	To cash paid for a trunk for Mr. Williams,	0. 12. 6.

		£
30 Oct. 1769.	To cash paid Mr. Williams to pay his expenses,	1. 16. 0.
30 Oct. 1769.	To cash paid for a cloak for Mr. Williams,	3. 0. 6.
1 March, 1770.	To cash paid for Mr. Williams' horse, while at Douglass' on Staten Island,	3. 16. 8.
20 March, 1770.	Cash paid Mr Williams,	5. 8. 0.
20 March, 1770.	To ditto, paid for keeping his horse,	0. 12. 0.
10 April, 1770.	To cash paid Dr. Nesbit for attendance on Mr. Williams, &c.	4. 10. 6.
24 April, 1770.	To flannel for Mr. Williams,	0. 3. 0.
11 June, 1770.	To cash for a letter for Mr. Williams from Dublin,	0. 2. 8.
26 July, 1770.	To John Beck for keeping Mr. Williams' horse,	0. 16. 6.
26 July, 1770.	To cash paid Mr. Maloney for shaving preachers,	2. 5. 6.
Sept., 1770.	To postage on two letters, one for Mr. Williams and one for Mr. Pillmoor,	0. 4. 8.
15 April, 1771.	To Mr. Newton for Mr. Williams,	2. 5. 6.
30 Aug., 1771.	To cash paid Caleb Hyatt for Mr. Williams' horse keeping,	1. 18 0.

From this record it appears that Mr. Williams la-

bored in the City of New York with brief intervals from the fall of 1769 to the close of the summer of 1771.

There is no entry in the accounts from the 30th of October, 1769, to the first of March the following year.

Messrs. Boardman and Pillmoor landed at Gloucester Point, in New Jersey on the 24th of October, 1769; thence they came to Philadelphia. After remaining there a short time they separated, Boardman going to New York, while Pillmoor made a short visit to Robert Strawbridge, in Maryland. Soon after the arrival of Boardman, Williams visited Philadelphia and received from Pillmoor a general license to travel and preach as a missionary. He next appears in Maryland, where he probably spent the winter, laboring in union with Strawbridge, the father of Methodism in that State, and John King, who had lately come over from England and received license to preach as a missionary. Under these faithful men "a good work began in Baltimore county and other parts of the State," the fruits of which remain to this day.

In this revival William Watters, the first native itinerant American Methodist preacher, was converted.

Early in the spring, Williams was again in New York. His labors were confined to that section until the fall of 1771, when we find him on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, passing down the peninsular toward the lower portion of Virginia. This journey is spoken of as a "successful missionary tour." It was a gathering of first fruits. Methodism has since reaped a great harvest in that part of Maryland.

The date of his first appearance in Virginia, is 1772. He landed at Norfolk early in the year, and at once opened his mission. He preached his first sermon at the door of the Court House. Standing on the steps, he began to sing. Attracted by the novel sound the people gathered around, and gazed on him with astonishment. The hymn finished, he kneeled and prayed. He then announced his text, and preached to a most disorderly crowd. A few listened, but most of them talked, laughed, and moved about in all directions. Nothing daunted, the sturdy missionary poured from a full heart the simple truths of the gospel. To the wondering multitude he was an enigma. Never had they heard the like. "Sometimes," said they, "he would preach, then he would pray, then he would swear, and at times he would sing."

Unaccustomed to hearing preachers freely use the words, "hell," "devil," &c., in their sermons, when he warned them of the danger of going to hell, of being damned forever, of dwelling with the devil and his angels, they declared he was swearing. "He is mad," was the verdict. Of course no house was opened to entertain a madman. He preached again. A few hearts were touched, and the stranger was fed and sheltered, not as mad, but as speaking the words of truth and soberness. The tree of Methodism was thus planted in an uncongenial soil, but, watered from on high, it struck its roots deep, and put forth goodly branches, bearing much fruit.

For a very interesting reminiscence of Robert Williams' early labors in Norfolk, the writer is indebted

to the venerable and Rev. Arthur Cooper, who yet lingers among us in

> "An old age serene and bright,
> And peaceful as a Lapland night."

After the burning of the first Cumberland Street Church, and while the workmen were clearing away the rubbish and digging for the foundation of the new building, they came upon a fragment of an old brick wall, the remains of a house that once occupied the spot. Mr. Cooper's mother, one of the oldest Methodists in the town, stated that she distinctly remembered one of Williams' sermons preached from the front steps of a house that stood on this very spot.

It is a remarkable coincidence that the Methodists should have unwittingly built their first church on the spot where their first preacher stood and delivered his message to the multitude that crowded the narrow street.

Portsmouth was at this time visited by this faithful man, and the seed of the gospel cast into good ground. At the time of his arrival at Norfolk, Isaac Luke, a citizen of Portsmouth, happened to be in the place on business. He was a member of the Church of England, and possessed the form of godliness. The moment he saw Williams he was struck with his appearance, and determined to hear him preach. Detained by his business, he reached the Court House after the preacher had taken his text and was in the midst of his sermon. As he listened the word went to his heart; he felt that the speaker was a preacher of righteousness, and of a different stamp from any he

had ever listened to. He felt that he needed a thorough change of heart before he could become a Christian indeed and in truth. At the close of the sermon he approached the stranger and invited him to visit Portsmouth. The next day Williams went over and preached the first Methodist sermon ever heard in the town, under a couple of persimmon trees, where seats had been provided for the congregation.

Williams continued to preach in the open air, and in private houses until his friend Luke, and a few others, fitted up a warehouse as a preaching place. A good degree of success attended the labors of the missionary. Numbers were deeply convinced of sin and turned to God. Isaac Luke was under deep concern for his soul; indeed so great was his anguish of mind, that his friends feared the loss of his reason. But these fears were groundless; it was a strange thing in those days to see persons under very serious concern for their souls, and to hear them crying out, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He was happily converted and became a pious and useful member of the Methodist Church, in which some of his descendants remain to this day.

How long Williams continued his labors in Norfolk and Portsmouth we have no information. It is not unlikely that he soon recrossed the Bay and resumed his work in Maryland. He was followed in the spring by Pillmoor, who, in connection with Boardman, had planned a tour of observation from Philadelphia as far South as Savannah. His labors were confined during the summer to Norfolk, Portsmouth, and other places in the Eastern part of the State. His earnest

and powerful preaching excited the opposition of the easy-going Parish Clergy of that day. During his temporary absence from the town the church parson attempted to turn the tide of feeling more strongly against the Methodists by preaching a sermon from the text: "Be not righteous overmuch." He assured the people that he knew from experience the evil of being over righteous; at which of course they felt no small degree of surprise. He failed, however, to make his points clear, and his warmest friends were sadly disappointed at the performance. To the surprise of the parson, Pillmoor returned a few days after, and soon gave notice that he would preach on the verse next following the parson's text: "Be not overmuch wicked." The whole town was astir, and the people crowded to the preaching place. Having read the text, he said he had been informed that a certain divine of that town had given the people a solemn caution against being righteous overmuch. Then lifting his hands, and with a very significant countenance, he exclaimed, "and in Norfolk he hath given this caution!" That was sufficient. The odious conduct of the parson was exposed, and the people were severely rebuked.

The second visit of Williams to Norfolk was made in the fall of 1772 in company with William Watters. They made the journey by land from Baltimore. Crossing the Potomac at Alexandria they passed through the lower counties, speaking to the people personally about religion, and preaching whenever an opportunity offered.

On Saturday after leaving Baltimore they reached

King William Court House. Here they were kindly invited to lodge with a Mr. Martin and to preach the next day. They preached at his house in the forenoon, and at the Court House in the afternoon. The congregations were "tolerably large and well behaved, but discovered great ignorance of experimental religion."

On the whole route Williams and his youthful colleague preached at every convenient point, and introduced religious conversation as they rode by the way, and as they sat by the fireside in taverns, or in private houses; "but alas!" writes Watters, "we found very few in the course of three hundred miles who knew experimentally, anything of the Lord Jesus Christ, or the power of his grace."

They were the first Methodist preachers that had ever passed through this spiritual wilderness. Weary and worn with toil they at length reached Norfolk. The picture of the place drawn by Watters is by no means inviting. "Our friends," he says, "received us kindly, but I found very little satisfaction among them for some time. Their convictions were slight, and their desires very faint. The greater part of them could hardly be said to have the form of religion. Such Methodists I had never seen, nor did I suppose there were such upon earth. My experience and warm feelings led me to conclude that all who bore the name must be like those with whom I had been acquainted in the neighborhood I had left. Many hundreds attended preaching, but the most hardened, wild, and ill-behaved of any people I had ever beheld in any place."

This picture is highly colored, and naturally so, drawn by a young Christian in the full flush of his new-born zeal; it is, however, sustained in its main features by an anecdote of Pillmoor. As he was passing through Portsmouth on his return from the South, he came upon two men at the ferry, who were swearing most horribly. He raised his hands, and with a stern voice exclaimed: "Well! if I had been brought to this place blindfolded, I should have known I was near Norfolk."

The winter of 1772, Williams spent in Norfolk and its vicinity. In February, the next year, we find him in Petersburg. He came at the solicitation of two gentlemen, whose names are identified with the introduction of Methodism into that town, Gressett Davis and Nathaniel Young. In the following letter to Wesley, dated July 11th, 1780, Davis gives a very interesting account of the rise and progress of Methodism in Petersburg and the adjacent country:

"About fifteen years ago the people called Anabaptists began to preach and make some stir. About the same time we were blessed with two worthy ministers of the Episcopal Church, who preached the strange doctrine of salvation by grace. Both these met with much opposition.

"Eleven years ago, under the preaching of good Mr. McRoberts, my eyes were opened to see the spirituality of the law. I was convinced of sin. This was the fourth sermon I had heard from this minister. The word *conversion* was as new to me as if there had been no such term in the English language. As to Christians, I knew not of one within twenty miles;

in short, I did not know that it was the privilege of any, except ministers of the gospel, to feel what I now experienced. I got acquainted with Mr. McRoberts, and some members of the Baptist Church, all of whom preached final perseverance. I was opposed to this doctrine, and stood against all their persuasions to become a Baptist.

"Mr. McRoberts and Mr. Jarratt preached the same. In 1772 I became acquainted with a young man from Yorkshire, England, who had been brought up from his youth in your societies, (Nathaniel Young by name,) who informed me of you and the people called Methodists. This young man, who I fear had lost the vital part of religion, an old formal Quaker, and myself, hired the Theatre in this place, and bound ourselves to invite any and every sect and party, who, we thought, preached the truth of the gospel as far as conversion, to come and preach in the said house, under this restriction, that they should not intermeddle with the principles of church government. We soon got many traveling preachers, more than at our set out I thought were in America, of Churchmen, Presbyterians, Baptists and Quakers, to come and preach, though nothing yet appeared from the devil's agents but persecution.

In a few months after the house was opened, the good Mr. Robert Williams, of your connexion, made a visit to Norfolk. Young and myself, both having connections in the mercantile line at Norfolk, invited the good old man up to this place. His entrance among us was in February, 1773. I informed this faithful servant of Christ that our faith was

plighted to each other not to admit any who would not promise not to intermeddle with opinions. The old man replied, we only wanted a change of heart and to preach up holiness of life. This we readily agreed to. He labored among us about the town, and no fruit appeared for several weeks. We then furnished him a horse, and he travelled into the country. In a short time a surprising work broke out in the country, which has since spread over every part of the State of Virginia and North Carolina. Thus entered and thus flourished Methodism, from an unexpected, and what may be called unlikely beginning, until many thousands were brought from the power of Satan to serve the true and the living God."

The Theatre, in which this "good old man" preached a "change of heart" and "holiness of life," was situated on Old street, not far from the river, a little below the present site of Murry's mill. That old house was honored with the presence of some of the choice spirits of the "thundering legion" of Methodism. It was the scene of many a hard fought battle with the powers of darkness. One terrible assault from the sons of Belial has been handed down by tradition to the present day. Two glowing heralds, Hope Hull and John Easter, were the preachers. The house was packed from door to pulpit. The slain of the Lord were many, and the power of God was present to heal them. Excited by the cries and groans of the stricken sinners within, the furious sinners without raved round the house like a tempest. At length they gathered, and rushed

with yells and curses against the doors. They burst in among the worshippers, throwing lighted squibs and fire-crackers. Meanwhile, another band brought up a fire-engine and played a stream of water into the house until every light was put out, saints and sinners involved in darkness, save where a bursting fire-cracker gave a momentary gleam, and the whole congregation routed and driven from the place. Great was the joy of the wicked; but short was their triumph. God was in the work; his hand moved it on in the midst of opposition, and its blessed influences reached and subdued not a few of those who had fought against it.

The earnest, evangelical preaching of Williams soon brought him to the notice of McRoberts and Jarratt. They were the most godly and useful preachers of the Establishment in that part of the State. Archibald McRoberts was a Scotchman by birth. He was ordained in 1763, and was settled in Dale Parish, Chesterfield, in 1773–4–6. He and Jarratt were bosom friends. He differed in material points with the Church Clergy, and in 1779 left the Establishment, and united with the Presbyterians, among whom he was regarded as an excellent and useful man. He settled in the county of Prince Edward. An interesting anecdote is related of him in connection with the furious incursion of Tarleton into the State, in 1781. A detachment of soldiers was sent to rob and burn McRoberts' house: he had barely time to escape before the dragoons dashed into the yard. They broke into the house, ripped open the beds, smashed the furniture, set the house on fire

and rode off. It burned very slowly, and a sudden shower of rain extinguished the flames. McRoberts looked upon this as a divine interposition, and named the place Providence. It has ever since borne this name.

Devereux Jarratt, will ever be mentioned with love and veneration as a pure and zealous preacher of the gospel, and a warm friend of the early Methodist preachers. He was the minister of Bath Parish, Dinwiddie, from 1763 to 1801. He was born in New Kent county, January 6, 1732, and in early life lost his father. An elder brother inherited the moderate estate. He was sent to a plain school, and in the vacations, divided his time between working on the farm and training race horses and game cocks. Occasionally he worked as a carpenter, which trade his father had followed before him. At nineteen he determined to be a teacher. Hearing of a situation in Albemarle county, he set out to find it, carrying his all, save one shirt, on his back. He reached the place, and was engaged at a salary of £9. 7s. per annum. The third year he taught in the family of a pious lady who greatly assisted him in his religious life. He now became deeply concerned about the salvation of his soul, and being associated with Presbyterians he was inclined to that Church. But on reading certain Episcopal writers, he determined to take orders in the Established Church. Having saved sufficient money to pay his expenses, he sailed for England in the fall of 1762. He had to wait until the following spring before he received ordination. Meanwhile he lost all his money by the imprudence of a friend in whose

hands he had placed it for safe keeping. He was generously supplied by better friends with enough to bring him home. In 1763 he took charge of his parish. There were three churches, Saponey, Hatcher's Run and Butterwood. He at once entered upon his labors. The state of religion at that time, and the style of preaching adopted by the clergy, he describes as follows :

"Instead of moral harangues, and advising my hearers in a cool, dispassionate manner, to walk in the primrose paths of a decided, sublime and elevated virtue, and not to travel the foul track of disgraceful vice (the favorite style of preaching in that day), I endeavored to enforce in the most alarming colors, the guilt of sin, the entire depravity of human nature, the awful danger mankind are in, by nature and by practice, the tremendous curse to which they are obnoxious, and their utter inability to evade the sentence of the law and the stroke of divine justice by their own power, merit, or good works."

Such preaching soon began to tell. "What must I do to be saved?" became the great question.

Jarratt no longer confined himself to the churches, "but went out by day and by night, and at any time in the week, to private houses and convened the people for prayer, singing, preaching and conversation." The rumor of this work went to other parishes, and scores came to see for themselves. He had calls in abundance to preach the gospel in distant places; he responded, and soon had a circuit extending five or six hundred miles, "east, west, north, south."

He visited twenty nine counties in Virginia and

North Carolina, attending to his own parish on the Sabbath and itinerating all the week.

He averaged five sermons a week. His great zeal and success, and his alleged irregularity made him obnoxious to many of his clerical brethren. He was charged with a violation of an old English Canon, by preaching in private houses. He silenced them by saying that they never refused to preach a funeral sermon in a private house for forty shillings, and that he preached for nothing. Moreover, he told them that many of them broke the canon forbidding the use of cards, dice, tables, &c., to the clergy, and were not punished. Some complained that he encouraged laymen to pray in his presence, he begged them to remember how often they allowed ungodly laymen to swear in their presence without rebuke.

Religion was at a low ebb, when Jarratt began to preach his startling sermons. Not above seven or eight of the more aged persons at a church partook of the communion. When he first administered it, there were not more than this number that came forward to receive it; ten years after, at his three churches there were a thousand communicants. Many years this happy state of things existed, but a sad change came on. During the Revolutionary war many of the clergy, left without support, fled from their parishes, and their little flocks were soon scattered. Jarratt stood at his post, and when the Methodists appeared he joined with them heartily in all their labors. For this he was looked upon with an evil eye by the established clergy. He had but little intercourse with them, though he occasionally attended

some of their Conventions. At one held at Williamsburg in 1774, he was treated so unkindly, and heard the doctrine of Christianity so ridiculed, that he determined to attend no more. He kept this resolution until 1785, when he was present at one in Richmond, but he was so coldly received that he remained only a few hours and then rode home. He was better received at the Convention of 1790, which elected Bishop Madison; at that of 1792 he preached the opening sermon. On his way home he was requested to take part in an ordination at Petersburg. In the examination he refused two of the candidates as unfit for the office. "But what did that avail," says he, "another clergyman was called in, and I had the mortification to *hear* both of them ordained the same day. I say *hear*, for it was a sight I did not wish to see." He sat in a pew in the corner, his head covered with his handkerchief. The Bishop's excuse was that "ministers were so scarce, we must not be too strict." We would fain hope that the unfitness was intellectual, not moral.

Jarratt toiled on to the last. In 1795 he says: "I have now lived in the world just sixty-two years." He had long before lost the use of one eye. A cancer now appeared on his face; but he says, "old and afflicted as I am, I travelled more than one hundred miles last week, was at three funerals and married two couples." In less than three months he wrote nine hundred pages; a part of them he copied for the press, part he extracted and abridged. He had well nigh finished his work. On the 29th of January, 1801, he entered into rest, aged sixty-nine. His widow

survived him many years. They had no children. This faithful man will reäppear again in the course of our narrative.

The first meeting between Jarratt and Williams was in March 1773, a few weeks after the arrival of the latter at Petersburg.

Jarratt draws this picture of his new friend: "He was a plain, artless, indefatigable preacher of the gospel; he was greatly blessed in detecting the hypocrite, razing false foundations, and stirring up believers to press after a present salvation from the remains of sin." Such a man was well fitted for the work upon which he was now entering. How greatly he was honored of God in it, even the meager history of his brief career will abundantly prove.

On the 14th of July, 1773, the first American Conference assembled at Philadelphia. It is not known how many preachers attended, certainly not more than "six or seven, most of whom were from England." The whole number of members reported was 1160, viz: New York 180, Philadelphia 180, New Jersey 200, Maryland 500, Virginia 100. Six circuits were formed and ten preachers were stationed; of these Virginia had two; "Norfolk, Richard Wright; Petersburg, Robert Williams." It appears from the most reliable accounts that the whole of the year 1773 was spent by Mr. Williams in preaching and forming societies in that section of the State south of Petersburg. By him the Lee family was received into the society, which from the days of Jesse Lee until now has never lacked able representatives in the ranks of Methodism. No regular circuit was formed until the

spring or summer of 1774. During that year many societies were organized in Mr. Jarratt's parish, "and in other places, as far as North Carolina." "They now," says Mr. Jarratt, "began to ride the circuit and to take care of the societies formed, which was rendered a happy means, both of deepening and spreading the work of God." Truthful words! The itinerancy, after a trial of eighty-five years from the time here spoken of, is still found to be "a happy means, both of deepening and spreading the work of God." May the day never dawn when this shall no longer be true of Methodism.

The good parish minister joined in the work with a zeal worthy of his Master's cause; as we have seen, he had been one of the chief instruments in the glorious work to which the flaming Wesleyans gave a new and powerful impulse. He speaks like an unselfish and true-hearted Christian: "I earnestly recommended it to my societies to pray much for the prosperity of Zion, and for a large outpouring of the Spirit of God. They did so; and not in vain. We had times of refreshing indeed: a revival of religion as great as perhaps was ever known in country places, in so short a time."

On his way to the second Conference, Mr. Williams met with Mr. Asbury in Baltimore. Their zeal burnt with a stronger flame as they mutually rehearsed the goodness of the Lord in their respective fields of toil. "He gave us," says Asbury, "a circumstantial account of the work of God in those parts. One house of worship is built, and another in contemplation; two or three more preachers are gone out upon the itinerant

plan: and in some parts the congregations consist of two or three thousand people." But this joy had its balancing power; "evil minded persons had opposed the Act of Toleration, and threatened to imprison" the Virginia Apostle. He escaped from their clutches, however, and went on his way rejoicing that he could suffer for the cause of Christ.

The one hundred reported to the first Conference were the early fruits of Mr. Williams' labors. The next year the work greatly increased. Brunswick, the first circuit formed in the Old Dominion, returned to the Conference of 1774, two hundred and eighteen members, while Norfolk alone, almost reached the whole number reported in 1773, the faithful labors of Richard Wright having swelled the little band to seventy-three.

Petersburg, included in the Brunswick circuit, had a society feeble in numbers, but strong in faith. The old Theatre, the scene of their sufferings and their triumphs, was abandoned, and a church built. To this house Mr. Asbury probably refers in the passage just quoted. It was situated on Harrison street west of the lot now occupied by Mr. G. W. Bolling. The struggle for Independence began soon after its completion, and it was occupied by the patriot soldiers stationed in the town, first as barracks and afterwards as a hospital, and was finally destroyed by fire. After the loss of the church, Gresset Davis threw open his house for preaching. John Cooke, living in that part of the town called Pocahontas, offered his house for the same purpose. The names of a portion at least

of those who constituted the infant society have been preserved.

John Cooke, leader; Ann Cooke, Gresset Davis, Martha Davis, David Thweat, William Worsham, Sarah Worsham, Francis Baird, Batt. Gilmour, Nathaniel Parrot, Lucy Parrot, William Lewis, Samuel Brazington, George Elliot, Peggy Elliot, Francis Bearil, Sarah Langby, Mary Wirom, Susanna Burton, Frances Jackson, Jane Stephenson, Elias Barnaby. The name of Nathaniel Young is not in the list and it is doubtful whether he united with the society.

Soon after the close of the war the second church was built. The enterprise was started by the indefatigable Davis, who headed the list with a subscription of fifty pounds, no small sum in those days. This house stood in Market street, near the residence of Mr. Hartwell Heath. It is described as "very small, unique of its kind, and showing any amount of props, beams, and girders." It was afterward enlarged, and a gallery added for the colored people. But it was a holy place in its plainness, and greatly honored by the Divine presence. Of many a happy spirit shall it be said, in the day of the Lord, he was born there.

It is supposed that the Methodists had no church building in Norfolk until about the year 1794. Mr. Asbury on his first visit to the place in June, 1775, found them worshipping in an "old, shattered building which had formerly been a play-house." Here as in Petersburg they began in one of Satan's deserted temples. He immediately "set on foot a subscription for building a house of worship," but the society

was poor, feeble in numbers, and lacked spirituality, liberality and zeal. Only about thirty-four pounds were obtained. War was impending, "martial clamours confused the land," and the scheme was deferred to a more auspicious period.

They held on to the "old, shattered play-house," and in the midst of all his discouragements, Asbury cherished the hope that the Methodists would yet "have a house and a people" in Norfolk.

Joseph Herriter, a faithful and zealous man, opened his house for preaching, and it was thus honored for years before the erection of a church. It stood at the intersection of Church and Free Mason streets, but has long since passed away, and given place to more modern structures. The first Methodist church in Norfolk was built on a lot fronting the west side of Fen Church street. It stood on blocks seven or eight feet high, on account of the marshy nature of the ground, and to protect it from the tide which made up very near the spot. It was a plain wooden building, with an end gallery for the colored people, capable of seating about four hundred persons.

In the minutes of the Conference for 1774, the name of Robert Williams is found under the question, "who are assistants this year?" but it does not appear in the appointments. It is probable that he married about that time, and ceased to travel as a regular itinerant. His home was on the main road, about midway between Suffolk and Portsmouth. Here he died. For many years his grave was remembered and pointed out by a connection of the family in which he married, but since her death all trace of

the last resting place of this venerated pioneer of Methodism has been lost. Not the rudest stone marked the spot; perhaps the very grave yard has been turned out into the common; or the careless plow boy whistles his merry air as he drives his bright share over the dust of Robert Williams.

On the 26th of September, 1775, the "good old man" laid aside his armor and entered into rest. Bishop Asbury, in his journal thus briefly notices the melancholy event: "Tuesday 26. Brother Williams died. The Lord does all things well: perhaps brother Williams was in danger of being entangled in worldly business, and might thereby have injured the cause of God. So he was taken away from the evil." On Thursday following his funeral was preached by Mr. Asbury.

Robert Williams was neither a brilliant nor a learned man; he was "a plain, simple hearted, pious man," laboring with untiring zeal and with wonderful success in his Master's cause. He preached in an "affectionate and animated manner" that went directly to the hearts of his hearers.

The following picture is from Lee's history: "He was a plain, artless, indefatigable preacher of the Gospel, and often proved the goodness of his doctrine, by his tears in public, and by his life and conduct in private. His manner of preaching was well calculated to awaken careless sinners, and to encourage penitent mourners. He spared no pains in order to do good He frequently went to church to hear the established clergy, and as soon as divine service was ended he would go out of the church, and standing on a stump,

block, or log, began to sing, pray, and then preach to hundreds of people. It was common with him, after preaching, to ask most of the people some question about the welfare of their souls."

He was the first preacher in America that followed the example of Mr. Wesley in the circulation of tracts and books. Jesse Lee also tell us that he "reprinted many of Mr. Wesley's books and spread them through the country." He issued Wesley's sermons in tract form and circulated them freely with the happiest results. He thus "gave the people great light and understanding in the nature of the New Birth and in the Plan of Salvation." These silent messengers also "opened the way for the preachers to many places where they had never been before." The first Conference interdicted the printing of books as a private enterprise. No preacher in America was to print "any of Mr. Wesley's books without his authority, and the consent of his brethren." Mr. Williams received permission to sell the books he had already printed, but was to print no more save in accordance with the resolution of the Conference. It was designed by that action to make the publication of books a denominational enterprise, with a view to the establishment of a fund for charitable purposes. From this germ grew the mammoth Book Concern of the Methodist Church. To Robert Williams is partially due the credit of turning the thoughts of the early preachers toward a field that has since yielded so rich a harvest. For, besides the pecuniary gains of this great scheme, by which the church has fed her hungry and clothed her naked, in how vast a

multitude of souls have the seeds of life been planted by means of good books scattered broad-cast over the land?

We look with peculiar feelings on him who stands first in a great cause. Robert Williams preached the first Methodist sermon on Virginia soil, he formed the first society, he printed the first Methodist book, he aided in building the first church, he made out the plan of the first circuit, he was the first to marry, the first to locate the first to die, the first of that band of heroes that passed into the City of our God, and took his place amid the white-robed Elders around the Throne.

His record though brief and imperfect on earth, is fully written in heaven. His zeal and fidelity are certified to us by his great co-laborer, Francis Asbury, and by his illustrious son in the Gospel, Jesse Lee.

Six years was he spared after landing in America, then his light went out in death; and Asbury, returning from his fresh grave, sat down and wrote in his journal: "He has been a very useful, laborious man, and the Lord gave him many seals to his ministry. Perhaps no man in America has been an instrument of awakening so many souls as God has awakened by him."

Jesse Lee said: "Although he is dead, he yet speaketh to many of his spiritual children, while they remember his faithful preaching and his holy walk."

CHAPTER III.

The new Circuit in Virginia—Its preachers—its extent—Great revival—Francis Asbury in Virginia—Poor prospects in his field—George Shadford—Wonderful revival under his preaching in Virginia—Jarratt heartily joins in the work—his estimate of it—Thomas Rankin—His preaching in Virginia—Extent of the revival—Increase in the membership—Sad effect of the war—Prejudices against English preachers—Conference at Leesburg—First ever held in Virginia—Decrease in the membership—Edward Dromgoole—Isham Tatum—New circuits. Agitation on the question of Ordinances.

FROM the Conference held at Philadelphia, May 25, 1774, four preachers were sent to Virginia. "Norfolk, John King; Brunswick, John Wade, Isaac Rollins, Samuel Spragg."

The new circuit embraced as much territory as two or three modern Districts. It was formed on the six weeks' plan, and "extended from Petersburg to the south, over Roanoke river, some distance into North Carolina." The preachers following each other at intervals of two weeks, were received with open arms and hearts by a people hungry for the bread of life. The old pioneer, Williams, who still lingered in the field, joined them in their happy toil; crowds flocked by day and by night to the preaching places; the word of God fell with power on the hearts of the people, and the flame of revival rose and spread throughout the vast field. The blessed work went on with but little intermission during the winter and

spring of 1774 and 1775. Mr. Williams was again the bearer of good tidings to Mr. Asbury at Baltimore. Under date of April, 1775, he says in his journal: "I met with Brother Williams from Virginia, who gave me a great account of the work of God in those parts;—five or six hundred souls justified by faith, and five or six circuits formed."

While this great work was going on in Brunswick circuit, John King was not idle at his post. He was not confined to Norfolk and Portsmouth, but regarded himself as a missionary "to the south parts of Virginia, where his labors were made a blessing to many people." It should be borne in mind, that in those days there were no stations in the modern sense of the term, the towns being only central points, from which the strongholds of the enemy were assaulted in all directions. They formed part and parcel of the circuits, as they do still among the English Wesleyans. A deep religious feeling seized the hearts of the people wherever the preachers appeared. Jesse Lee, who mingled in these scenes of revival, burning with zeal as a young soldier of the cross, says, "the Lord wrought wonders among us that year." He was "glad to go to meeting by night or by day," travelled many miles "on foot" to hear the word preached, and "thought himself highly favored" and amply repaid for the toil. We may well believe that the same spirit animated the entire company of believers in that day. Nor were they merely hearers of the word; when sinners fell beneath the sword of the Spirit, and cried aloud for mercy, the Christians gathered round, and amid their prayers, and songs,

and instructions, the struggling captives burst into life, liberty, and happiness. Often were the exercises of prayer and praise continued through the night, and the gray dawn broke on saints and sinners wrestling with the Angel of the Covenant like Jacob on Peniel, each crying in the faintness of the flesh, but in the strength of faith, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

The returns made from Virginia to the third Conference, May 17, 1775, greatly rejoiced the hearts of the brethren. Norfolk reported 125 against 73 the previous year, while in Brunswick there were 800 members, a net increase of 582. Thirty members were reported from Fairfax, a new circuit which had been formed during the year, and embraced probably the entire scope of country bordering on the Potomac River, reaching from Dumfries, in Prince William county, to Leesburg, and possibly as far west as the Blue Ridge. A new circuit had also been formed covering a large territory on the north side of the James River. It was called Hanover, "but in the minutes it was included in Brunswick circuit." So inviting a field was not to be neglected. Six preachers were appointed to Virginia, nearly one-third of the whole number that composed the Conference.

"Norfolk, Francis Asbury; Brunswick, George Shadford, Robert Lindsay, Edward Dromgoole, Robert Williams, William Glendenning." The name of Mr. Williams was continued on the minutes, and he was put down in the appointments for Virginia, though he was in fact local. He was probably held as a supply in case of sickness or absence on the

part of the regular itinerants. There is no special locating act of the Conference in the minutes; indeed, no reference appears to have been made to the subject until the Conference of 1779, when for the first time occurs the question, "Who desist from travelling?"

On Monday, May 29, 1775, Francis Asbury landed at Norfolk. It was his first appearance in Virginia. The prospects in the town were not flattering. He found thirty persons in society, with no regular class meetings, and no place of worship but the "old, shattered play-house." He preached on Tuesday evening to "about one hundred and fifty souls;" the next morning at five o'clock to "about fifty." The presence of God was with them, "it was a good time," and hope began to dawn in the heart of the preacher. Mr. Asbury made Norfolk and Portsmouth his headquarters, but extended his labors into the surrounding country. He found a "society of thirteen serious souls six miles from Portsmouth on the Suffolk road." There was another preaching place, and probably a few members near Crany Island. In another place, in the house of "a man of gloomy spirit but solid piety," he found "a true spiritual church—three souls all of one mind and sincerely intent on seeking and serving the Lord." Forcing his way to "the farthermost part of Portsmouth parish," through such a swamp as he had never seen before, he found a few "people of simple heart," to whom he preached and with whom he "partook of a blessing." For five months he toiled in town and country with but little success.

Portsmouth gave him more hope and comfort

than any other place. Here he found "a few as faithful and happy souls as perhaps we have in any part of Virginia;" the power of Satan was great, however, among the people both here and in Norfolk, for he immediately adds, "and unless Divine justice has determined destruction on these two towns, I hope the Lord will undertake for them and increase their number." He found twenty-seven persons in society in Portsmouth when he first came in June; he carefully sifted the chaff from the wheat, and in October the number was reduced to fourteen.

While Asbury was toiling on amid these discouragements, the whole region embraced in the Brunswick circuit was flaming with revivals. Tidings of the work reached Asbury, and he burned with desire to be with his "dear brother Shadford," in that part of the vineyard. In October he writes: "I expect to go to Brunswick shortly, and my heart rejoices in hopes of seeing good days, and many souls brought to God in those parts." One week later he writes exultingly, "I am bound for Brunswick!" The people were unwilling to give him up. "Some that had been displeased with my strictness in discipline were now unwilling to let me go; but I fear they will not soon see me again, if they should even say 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!'" He pushed on rapidly, and three days after writes, "I am now within a few miles of dear brother George Shadford; my soul catches the holy fire already."

George Shadford, the chief instrument in the great work which broke out in the latter part of 1775, in

the counties south of Petersburg, was born in England, January 19, 1739. His life before his entrance into the ministry was an eventful one. His parents were nominally religious, and took him to church once at least every Sunday; when dinner was over, he and his sister "read a chapter or two in the Bible," and were "charged not to play in the afternoon." He was taught to say his prayers every night and morning, and was sent to be catechized regularly every Sunday by the Parish minister. At fourteen he was confirmed, and at sixteen partook of the Sacrament. This made a deep impression on his mind. "When I approached the table of the Lord, it appeared so awful to me, that I was likely to fall down, as if I was going to the judgment seat of Christ." Three months his good impressions continued. His Sundays were devoted to reading; sometimes in his chamber, at other times in the fields; but his choice place for religious exercises was the church-yard. Among the graves he would linger for hours together, reading, reflecting and praying, until in the transport of his love, he seemed to be "tasting the power of the world to come."

But he did not then find peace. "Had I been acquainted with the Methodists at that time, I should have soon found remission of sins and peace with God. But I had not a single companion that feared God; all were light and trifling; the whole town was covered with darkness, and sat in the shadow of death." He soon lost all the ground he had gained, all good desires and resolutions, and plunged head-

long into sin. Wrestling, running, leaping, football, dancing were his favorite sports; he gloried in them, and excelled all the young men "in the town and parish." At twenty he seemed a "compound of life and fire, and had such a flow of animal spirits," that he was never so happy as when leading in such sports.

He now felt a martial spirit, and for seven guineas took the place of a man who had been drafted to serve in the army. The first winter while in camp he fell sick of a violent fever, and found himself "horribly afraid of death," but he recovered alike of his fever and his fears. The dread of being killed in battle hung over him continually; he felt that he should be lost, soul and body together.

His convictions clung to him amidst all the dissoluteness of the camp. The next year his misery increased. Exceedingly provoked by a comrade, he "swore at him two bitter oaths." Immediately he felt as if stabbed to the heart by a sword. An awful sense of guilt fell upon him, and he at once abandoned his habit of swearing. Temptations to put an end to his life haunted him day and night. He was afraid to stand on the river bank lest he should throw himself in; if he stood on the edge of a great rock, he was seized with trembling and instantly fled lest he should cast himself down headlong; in the gallery at church he was many times forced to draw back, "being horribly tempted to pitch headforemost among the people. It seemed as if Satan was permitted to wreak his malice upon me in an uncom-

mon manner to make me miserable; but, glory be to God, I was wonderfully preserved by an invisible hand in the midst of such dreadful temptations."

In this state of mind he went to a Methodist meeting. The preacher's manner was new to him and struck him forcibly. "He took out his hymn-book and the people sung a hymn. After this he began to pray extempore in such a manner as I had never heard or been used to before. After this he took his little ible out of his pocket, read over his text, and put it into his pocket again. I marvelled at this, and thought within myself, 'Will he preach without a book too?'" The preacher was not learned, nor did the young soldier hear any thing to convince him that the speaker had studied at Oxford or Cambridge; but something struck him: "This is the gift o. God! This is the gift of God!" While he spoke against pleasure takers, and proved that such were dead while they lived, Shadford was cut to the heart, and thought: "If what he says is true, I am in a most dreadful condition." He felt it to be true, for the preacher proved it all by the word of God. Immediately he found a judgment-seat erected in his soul, before which he was "tried, cast, and condemned." He now resolved to change his life, went to church every Sunday, and was in a fair way to become a new man. But he could not stand the ridicule of his comrades, and gave up all hope of being a Christian while in the army. He then solemnly vowed that if God would spare him twelve months, until his discharge, he would serve him. So he

"resolved to venture another year in the old way, damned or saved. The next move of the camp was to a place famous for "swearing, cursing, drunkenness and Sabbath-breaking." Here in the midst of these horrible scenes he was again "arrested with strong convictions." He was often compelled to leave his comrades at noon-day, run to his room, throw himself on his knees, and weep bitterly.

"I thought 'sin, cursed sin, will be my ruin.' I was ready to tear the very hair from my head, thinking I must perish at last, and that my sins would sink me lower than the grave." One day his landlady, passing the door of his room, saw him on his knees in an agony of prayer. At night she took him to task: "Sir, are you a Wesleyan or a Whitefieldite?" "'Madam,' said I, 'what do you mean? Do you reproach me because I pray, because I pray?' She paused. I said again, 'Madam, do you never pray to God? I think I have not seen you at church or any other place of worship these ten weeks I have been at your house.' She replied, 'No; the parson and I have quarrelled, and therefore I do not choose to go to hear him!' I answered, 'A poor excuse, madam; and will you also quarrel with God?'"

But the soldiers laughed him out of the little form of prayer he had. "I dropped the form of kneeling by the bedside and said my prayers in bed."

He was soon after discharged from the army, and returned home. His convictions were greatly deepened by finding a young woman dead to whom he had been tenderly attached. He sought her grave,

and while he stood in deep thought, he cast his eye on a neighboring tombstone and read,

> "In bloom of youth into this town I came;
> Reader, repent; thy lot may be the same."

He felt as if something thrilled through him. He "read and wept, and read and wept again." He found it was the grave of a gay young lady, who had come to town to attend a ball. At midnight, in the midst of the dance, she fell to the floor, was taken to her bed, and from it to the church-yard.

A short time after he attended preaching at the house of a farmer who had received the Methodist preachers. As the sermon closed, he "trembled, he shook, he wept; he felt that he should fall down in the midst of the people." At length the preacher called out, "Is there any young man here about my age willing to give up all and come to Christ? Let him come and welcome, for all things are now ready." In a moment, pierced to the heart with the sword of the Spirit, Shadford cried out, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Instantly the Lord whom he sought came to his temple. "Quick as lightning the Lord filled my soul with divine love; tears of joy and sorrow ran down my cheeks. I sat down in a chair, for I could stand no longer. Twenty times over these words ran through my mind, 'Marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.'" He knew not they were in the Bible, until he went home and opened upon them in the Psalms.

In a fortnight he joined the Methodists. His aged parents were the first fruits of his labors. He was

soon called to the office of class-leader and his services were greatly blessed to the societies in his neighborhood. He battled with fearful doubts before he consented to take up his cross and preach. The night before his first sermon, he spent "three or four hours, until past midnight, in fervent prayer" that the Lord would direct his way and give a convincing proof of his call. The next day under the word several were cut to the heart, and the people of God made to rejoice; the young preacher went home perfectly satisfied of his call to the work. He was now fairly in the field, and his ardor carried him beyond his strength. Loud and long preaching, long and fatiguing walks, praying and reading often through the whole night, brought him to the verge of the grave. As he lay lingering between life and death God seemed to give him a vision of his future field. "One day, as I was in bed, full of the love of God, I had a visionary sight of two prodigious fields, in which I saw thousands of living creatures praying and wrestling in different places, in little companies."

He felt that he must go to the help of these struggling masses. He took up his Bible and opened on the words "Thou shalt not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." His recovery was rapid from this time, and after continuing to preach two years longer in a local capacity, he was received by Mr. Wesley into the Conference. He labored efficiently in England for several years. Meeting with Captain Webb, at the Conference at Leeds, in 1772, and hearing him exhort the preachers to go to America, he felt his spirit stirred in him to go. He and Mr.

Rankin offered, and were accepted by Mr. Wesley. When he came to the port where the ship lay in which he was to embark "an awful dream" which he had six years before came to his mind. He dreamed that he received a letter from God which contained these words: "You must go to preach the gospel in a foreign land, unto a fallen people, a mixture of nations." "I thought I was conveyed to the place where the ship lay in which I was to embark in an instant. The wharf and ship appeared as plain to me as if I were awake. I replied, 'Lord, I am willing to go in thy name; but I am afraid a people of different nations and languages will not understand me. This answer was given: 'Fear not, for I am with thee.' I awoke, awfully impressed with the presence of God, and full of divine love. I could not tell what this meant, and revolved these things in my mind for a long time. But when I came to Peel, and saw the ship and wharf, then all came fresh to my mind. I said to Brother Rankin, 'This is the ship, the place, and the wharf, which I saw in my dream six years ago.'"

They embarked "and after a comfortable passage of eight weeks," landed at Philadelphia, June 3, 1773. They were kindly received by a "hospitable and loving people." Shadford crossed over to "the Jerseys," and spent a month in preaching and visiting, adding during that time thirty-five to the society. Here he met with John Brainerd, brother to the celebrated Indian Missionary, David Brainerd. "He heartily wished us good luck, and said he believed the Lord had sent us upon the Continent to revive

inward religion among them." He next went to New York, where he labored four months, adding fifty members to the society. Five months he spent in Philadelphia, "with a loving, teachable people," where many "were converted to God." His next field was Baltimore. From this city he extended his labors into the country around, and was greatly successful. Four miles from Baltimore he was called to see a poor young man who was kept chained in bed, supposed to be mad, or possessed of a devil. He found him under strong conviction and in the depth of despair. He staid by the bed-side, and spoke of Jesus to the sufferer, then called the family, and all kneeled in prayer. The power of God fell upon them; every heart melted, every eye streamed with tears; they rose, unchained the young man's limbs, God smote the fetters from his soul, and he rejoiced in spiritual freedom. He began to warn his neighbors, soon after took a circuit, and that year a hundred sinners were awakened under his ministry.

Shadford's appointment to Virginia caused him much dejection of mind, but he often "felt much of this before a remarkable manifestation of the power and presence of God." He felt that the Lord would strip and empty before he filled.

He entered upon his work in Virginia in the summer of 1775. The ground had been in a measure prepared by Williams, Jarratt and others, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.

There were eight hundred in society on the circuit, but they were joined "in a very confused manner." Many classes were without leaders, and many of the

members did not understand the nature of class meetings. The preachers resolved to begin in good earnest to instruct the societies. As soon as preaching was over they spoke to all the members one by one, and by this means they were soon well instructed in the doctrines and discipline of the Church. The most cheering signs followed these efforts.

Shadford was amazed. Under almost every sermon sinners were convinced and converted; "often three or four at a time." Among the first converts was a dancing-master. On week days he came to meeting dressed in scarlet, on Sundays he appeared in green. He invited Shadford to preach in his own neighborhood; he could not at that time, every day being engaged. Still the dancing-master followed him, and brought another of his profession. Going to an appointment one day, a friend said to him, "Mr. Shadford, you spoiled a fine dancing-master last week." And so it proved. He was cut to the heart, and so burdened with a sense of guilt that "he could'nt shake his heels at all." He soon after found peace, joined the Methodists, lived six or seven years a faithful Christian, and died "a great witness for God." Shadford was on another occasion stopped by a great flood of water; turning back, he came to a large plantation and asked for lodging. He was kindly received, and after taking some refreshment, proposed to preach if a congregation could be had. A messenger was sent out, and many came, "but they were as wild as boars." The word however took effect upon their rude hearts; the planter and his wife were both converted, and a society of sixty or

seventy raised up in the settlement. The work gradually increased through the summer and fall; in midwinter it broke forth with unusual power. It began almost simultaneously at three different points, two of these were in Mr. Jarratt's parish, the other in Amelia county. The people in these neighborhoods had long been notorious for their wickedness. Immoralities of all kinds abounded. They delighted in gambling, swearing, drinking, racing, and held all sacred things in utter contempt. The year previous a few souls had been gathered in this unpromising field; this was the earnest of a great harvest. Shadford moved among the wondering multitude like an angel of light. Chapels and private houses were crowded by curious hearers; "their ears were opened by novelty, but God sent his word home upon their hearts." Convictions were powerful, indeed, awful; mercy! mercy! was the cry that rose to heaven by day and by night. The meetings were held for hours through the day, and often whole nights were spent in the blessed work of saving souls. All ages, and all grades felt the power of God and fell before it; veteran, gray-headed sinners, men in middle life, in the full strength of their manhood, young men, and maidens, and children of tender years, bowed together before the Lord, and lifted up their prayers to the mercy-seat. The preachers were not enough to carry on the mighty work; exhorters and class leaders took the stand, and multitudes hung upon their lips to hear the word of life.

No matter who spoke, the power of God "was still among the people;" and often in the prayer meetings

held by the people themselves, the manifestations of the Spirit were glorious and awful. Through a circumference of four or five hundred miles the flame swept on with increasing power.

In the beginning of May, 1776, at a quarterly meeting at Boisseau's Chapel, Dinwiddie county, the work broke out with astonishing power. "At that meeting," writes Jesse Lee, "the windows of heaven were opened indeed, and the rain of divine influence continued to pour down for more than forty days." In the love feast, on the second day, the whole assembly felt the power of the Holy Ghost. No sooner had the exercises begun than "the house was filled with the presence of God;" the flame leaped from heart to heart; sinners fell to the floor under strong conviction; mourners rose with shouts of praise; Christians were filled with love, and gave glad testimony to the power of Christ to save from all sin. The love feast ended, the doors were thrown open, and an eager multitude filled the house. The mingled scene of anguish and rejoicing struck them with astonishment. Silent they stood looking on; and then one after another sunk down with trembling and tears, and cried aloud for mercy. The work increased in power as the meeting progressed; on the last day "they continued in the meeting house till dark and then sent for candles, and continued till some time in the night." The noise of the battle rose on the still evening air, and rolled away in the distance. "I left them," says Jesse Lee, "about the setting of the sun, and at that time their prayers and cries might have been heard a mile off."

In so great a revival, where hundreds of persons of widely different temperaments were suddenly seized with the pangs of conviction, we might naturally expect some excessive enthusiasm. "This work," says Mr. Lee, "was not quite free from it. But it never rose to any considerable height, nor was it of long continuance." Like the Jews when Ezra laid the foundations of the second temple, "some wept for grief; others shouted for joy, but the voice of joy prevailed, the people shouted with a great shout, so that it might be heard afar off."

Hundreds from this meeting returned home, publishing the glad tidings as they went; the flame spread far and wide; in less than a month several hundred were converted, and hardly any thing was talked of but the wonderful work of God. The counties of Dinwiddie, Amelia, Brunswick, Sussex, Prince George, Lunenburg and Mecklenburg, all shared in the revival. The harvest appeared in every direction ready for the reapers, and God called and sent forth a number of zealous young men, who eagerly put in the sickle and rejoiced in great success.

In some parts of Sussex the work was exceedingly powerful, and in many instances the manifestations of Divine power struck terror into the hearts of scoffers who sought fun and frolic at the meetings. For seven years, at one point, had a faithful laborer toiled on exhorting his neighbors and hoping against hope; at length the cloud of mercy rose and the prelusive drops began to fall. At a class meeting two or three would find pardon; at a Sunday meeting, without a preacher, ten, fifteen, and twenty would be

converted. It was a common thing for men and women to fall down as dead under an exhortation, and twenty at a time under an earnest prayer. Some were converted in two or three hours, others in two or three days, and some struggled on for a week or more before deliverance came. One thoughtless girl left her brothers at prayer and went to bed, but in a moment after she screamed out in agony of soul, and rested not till she found peace. While the Christians were holding a class meeting a man was observed looking through the crack of the door; it was opened, he entered, and fell on the floor helpless as a child. Three hours he lay struggling under his load of sin, then "he rose and praised a pardoning God." Fifteen were converted that day. Six days after, at another meeting, a young lady came saying, she had heard that many people fell, and she had come to help them up. "The power of God soon seized her and she wanted helping up herself." Twenty souls found peace that day, among them the young lady. Another meeting was held soon after, "from twelve at noon till twelve at night." Jesus had fifteen witnesses at its close. The work was equally great in other counties.

Mr. Jarratt entered into this revival with all his heart. He went on with "the preachers, hand in hand, both in doctrine and discipline." His parish, at his own request, was included in the circuit, "that all who chose it might have the privilege of meeting in class and being members of the society." The wisdom of this was soon apparent. Numbers were awakened, many soundly converted, and "in a few months Mr. Jarratt saw more fruit of his labors than

he had seen for many years." The class meetings were particularly blessed. "Such a work," writes this good man, "I never saw with my eyes. Sometimes twelve, sometimes fifteen, find the Lord at one class meeting." It is certainly interesting to have the views of this honored minister of Christ in reference to the depth and genuineness of the work of grace in the hearts of the converts, and its after influence on their lives. He says: "With regard to the inward work, there has been a great variety as to the length, and depth, and circumstances of the convictions in different persons; but all in general have been at first alarmed with a sense of the multitude and heinousness of their sins; with an awful view of the wrath of God, and certain destruction if they persisted therein. Hence they betook themselves to prayer, and as time permitted, to the use of all other means of grace; although deeply sensible of the vileness of their performances, and the total insufficiency of all they could do to merit the pardon of one sin, or deserve the favor of God. They were next convinced of their unbelief, and faith in Christ as the only condition of justification. They continued thus waiting upon the Lord, till he spoke peace to their souls. This he usually did in one moment, in a clear satisfactory manner, so that all their griefs and anxieties vanished away, and they were filled with joy and peace in believing. Some indeed have had their burdens removed so that they felt no condemnation. And yet, they could not say they were forgiven. But they could not be satisfied with this. They continued instant in prayer till they knew the Lamb of God had taken away their sins.

"Most of these had been suddenly convinced of sin, but with some it was otherwise. Without any sense of their guilt, they were brought to use the means of grace by mere dint of persuasion; and afterward they were brought by degrees to see themselves, and their want of a Saviour. But before they found deliverance, they have had as deep a sense of their helpless misery as others."

Of the steadfastness of the converts, he says under date of September 10, 1776, "I have not heard of any one apostate yet. It is true, many, since their first joy abated, have given way to doubts and fears, have had their confidence in God much shaken, and have got into much heaviness. Several have passed through this, and are now confirmed in the ways of God. Others are in it still; and chiefly those over whom Satan had gained an advantage by hurrying them into irregular warmth, or into expressions not well guarded."

The following reflections from this truly useful man cannot be too deeply impressed upon the heart of a preacher. "A man of zeal, though with little knowledge or experience, may be an instrument of converting souls. But after they are converted, he will have need of much knowledge, much prudence and experience to provide proper food and physic for the several members, according to their state, habit, and constitution." As the most experienced minister then in the field, this work devolved especially on Mr. Jarratt; the growth of religion in his parish shows how faithfully he performed it.

In the summer Thomas Rankin came into Virginia.

He preached his first sermon at Boisseau's Chapel on the last day of June. Under the second sermon, in the afternoon, "such power descended that hundreds fell to the ground, and the house seemed to shake with the presence of God." The building was filled to the utmost, and hundreds from without pressed on all sides to get in. "Look wherever we would, we saw nothing but streaming eyes and faces bathed in tears; and heard nothing but groans and strong cries after God." The voice of the preacher was lost "amid the groans and prayers of the congregation." More than an hour the mighty effusion lasted. In vain the preachers attempted, again and again, to speak or sing. They could only sit in the pulpit "filled with the divine presence, exclaiming, 'This is none other than the house of God! this is the gate of heaven!'" The meeting continued until night, and even then the people reluctantly withdrew to their homes.

The next Sunday he preached at another church thirty miles distant. The text was from Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones: "And there was a great shaking." The house was crowded, while "four or five hundred stood at the doors and windows, listening with unabated attention." During the sermon he was compelled to stop several times and beg the people to be composed. They could not. While he was speaking, some were on their knees, others on their faces, "crying mightily to God." "Hundreds of negroes were among them, with the tears streaming down their faces."

Next Sunday he was again at Boisseau's. The

people were more quiet than on the former occasion, and at the close of the sermon he thanked them for their "good behaviour." He then left the place to dine with a friend. No sooner was he gone than they began "to sing, pray, and talk to their friends;" many knelt as penitents, and when the preacher came back, he found fifteen happy converts. He begged them to be quiet while he preached again. They restrained themselves till near the close of the sermon; then cries and tears, and prayers, again burst forth. In vain he appealed to them; the tide of feeling was too strong. He sat down and asked Shadford to speak to them. He rose, "and in a little time cried out in his usual manner: 'who wants a Saviour? the first that believes shall be justified.'" In a few minutes the house was ringing with the cries of broken-hearted sinners, and the shouts of happy believers. It was an awful time indeed.

Rankin continued his journey toward North Carolina, preaching to "large congregations" that "received the word with all readiness of mind." So "vehement was the thirst after the word of God" that he "frequently preached and prayed till he was hardly able to stand." They clung about him, and, "there was no getting away while he was able to speak one sentence for God." At Roanoke Chapel he preached to more than double what the house would hold. "The windows were all open, every one could hear, and hundreds felt the word of God."

He now returned upon his track, and on the 30th and 31st of July, held a quarterly meeting at "Mabury's dwelling house" in Brunswick. The scene

here was one of true moral grandeur. In anticipation of a vast crowd, an arbor had been built covering the yard, and capable of sheltering several thousand persons. The first day was one of power, but on the second the Holy Ghost fell on all that heard the word. Between eight and nine in the morning the Christians met in love-feast under the arbor; it lasted until noon. In the midst sat the band of believers, around as close as they could sit and stand, were hundreds and hundreds of people. In rapid succession the members rose and bore testimony to the saving power of the Gospel. Some told how the Lord had justified them freely, others, how and when the blood of Jesus had cleansed them from all sin; while others with strong cries and abundant tears, sought for "pardon or holiness." An awful feeling crept over the vast assembly; "hundreds were in tears." The oldest preachers present had hardly ever seen such a time. "For the work of God," says Rankin, "wrought on these two days, many will praise God to all eternity." The triumphs of the day closed with a watch-night, at which Mr. Jarratt preached "an excellent sermon," and "the rest of the preachers exhorted and prayed with divine energy"—surely these holy men were never weary in well-doing; beginning with a love-feast at nine in the morning, and closing at midnight; and throughout the day of battle, exhorting and praying with divine energy. There were giants in the land in those days.

Fourteen counties in Virginia were reached by this blessed work. It crossed the Roanoke into North Carolina, and in both States the fields were opening

wide and white to the reapers. When the preachers closed up their year's work, the result was glorious. Eighteen hundred had been added to the societies. Many had been sanctified and rejoiced in that perfect love that casteth out all fear.

The returns from Virginia to the fourth Conference, which met at Baltimore, May 21, 1776, will best show the state of the work at this time. In Fairfax the number had increased from 30 to 350; Hanover reported 270; Pittsylvania 100; Brunswick 1611: North Carolina returned 683; Norfolk, though blessed with the faithful services of Asbury, showed no increase, the number 125, stood the same as the preceding year. Nine preachers were sent from this Conference to Virginia. "Fairfax, William Watters, Thomas McClure, Adam Fornerdon: Brunswick, George Shadford, William Duke, William Glendenning: Pittsylvania, Isaac Rollins; Hanover, Philip Gatch, John Sigman." Norfolk was dropped from the minutes this year. "The war," says Jesse Lee, "had so distressed the town that we could not keep a preacher in that station." Hanover, Fairfax and Pittsylvania were enrolled as regular circuits. Philip Gatch, who labored this year in Hanover, gives a brief account of it in his memoirs: "My circuit was very large. It lay on both sides of James River and was a part of six counties. But it appeared like a new world of grace. The Baptists, who preceded us, had encountered and rolled back the waves of persecution. Shubal Stearns and Daniel Marshall, who were the first fruits of George Whitefield's labors in the East, had become Baptist,

members of the separate order. They travelled extensively through the State and others, through their instrumentality, were raised up, and became faithful and zealous ministers, and they endured a great deal of persecution. John Walter, with whom I became intimate, was an American in sentiment, a good preacher, and suffered much for the cause. He was confined in jail, first and last, one hundred and thirteen days, in different counties." The congregations were very large, and he was compelled to preach in the orchards and groves. In the fall, by exposure and excessive out-door preaching, his health gave way, and he came very near dying. "It appeared to me that my lungs were entirely gone. Frequently I would have to raise up in the bed to get my breath. I felt it even a difficulty to live. My sensations were as though thousands of pins were piercing me." But his work was not done; he lived more than half a century after this, a faithful laborer in the vineyard.

The preachers entered upon this work with spirit, and for a part of the year much success attended their labors. The influence of the great revival already noticed was still powerfully felt in many parts of Virginia, and many of the meetings were attended with extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit. But the black cloud of war hung over the land. The minds of men were agitated by conflicting interests and passions. The leading preachers being Englishmen, naturally sided with the mother country; some of them indiscretly gave expression to their opinions, and the whole class fell under suspicion. Asbury, the most prudent among them, was "fined five pounds

for preaching the gospel." Rankin, Shadford and Rodda were meditating a return to England. The native preachers, meanwhile, had hard work to maintain their influence in the midst of the prejudices which existed against their British brethren. Notwithstanding all this, the work of God went on powerfully in many places, and the returns to the next Conference showed an increase of twelve preachers, and two thousand and forty-seven members. The minutes of 1777 show that nearly the whole of this gain was in Virginia, the membership having risen to 4,449. Nineteen hundred and ninety-three members were added to the Church in this profitable field; fifty-four was the number reported from all other parts of the work. Eighteen preachers, one half the whole number, were appointed to Virginia from the fifth Conference, May 20, 1777.

Fairfax, Daniel Ruff, John Cooper, Thomas S. Chew, Isaac Rollins; Hanover, James Foster, Nicholas Watters, Samuel Strong; Amelia, Edward Dromgoole, Joseph Reese, Reuben Ellis; Brunswick, William Watters, Freeborn Garrettson, John Tunnell; Sussex, Philip Gatch, Hollis Hanson; Pittsylvania, John Sigman, Isham Tatum; Norfolk, Edward Bailey. Sussex and Amelia were set off from Brunswick as new circuits. Norfolk was replaced on the minutes. Philip Gatch, still in feeble health, was able to do but little in Sussex. He speaks of it as a pleasant circuit; a character it has ever since retained; it contained many promising societies, and the prospects were encouraging. He burned with desire to do good, but a single week's work would entirely

prostrate him. Feeble and sick, he still travelled from place to place, praying and preaching as his strength allowed. The kind people, fearing that in his lonely rides he might fall from his horse and die, usually sent a companion with him. One day while travelling with a youth, he was met by two rough, stout men. They seized him by his arms and turned them in opposite directions with such violence as nearly to dislocate his shoulders. The pain was dreadful. The torture he thought must be like that of the rack. His shoulders turned black, and it was a long time before he recovered their use. He does not tell us whether these wretches ever met with their well merited punishment. He remained on the circuit until the fall, when the preachers met to exchange appointments. Hanover had been so altered as to leave it only on the north side of James River. It was again divided so as to make a four weeks' circuit with the northern portion cut off; to this part Gatch was sent with a helper to form a new circuit. Doors were freely opened to them, many received the gospel gladly, and by Conference they had formed a four weeks' circuit, called Fluvanna.

Though there was some prosperity in certain portions of the work, this was comparatively a barren year. There were fightings without and fears within. The distress of war was on the land. The people in many places were divided in sentiment on the questions in dispute between the Colonies and England. Not only communities, but Christian societies, were thrown into confusion. The spirit of religion was lost in many quarters where it had flourished, and the

faithful mourned over the desolation of Zion. These troubles were greatly augmented by the tory zeal of Martin Rodda, one of the English preachers. He distributed the royal proclamation around his circuit, and strove to excite opposition to the American cause. Detected in this work, and dreading the just resentment of the people, he fled, by the aid of some negroes, to the British fleet, and soon after sailed for England. Mr. Wesley's "Calm Address to our American Colonies," reached this country and greatly increased the difficulties of the preachers. These afflictions were more severely felt in the Northern circuits, where the war raged with much violence at this period. The Southern circuits were more quiet and prosperous, though no part of the work was wholly free from the sad effects of the war. The returns to the Conference of 1778, at Leesburg, the first ever held in the State, showed a falling off of seven preachers and eight hundred and seventy-three members. It is impossible to say in what section there was the greatest gain or loss, as the minutes for that year omit names and numbers and give only the aggregate. Doubtless, the largest increase was in the old Brunswick circuit, and the new fields that had been taken from it. The influence of the great revival of the preceding year, was still felt among the people, and in many places the word of the Lord grew and multiplied amid all discouragements.

Two of the preachers, sent this year to Virginia, Edward Dromgoole, and Isham Tatum, were long identified with the interests of Methodism in the State. Dromgoole was an Irish emigrant. He settled

in or near Baltimore, and was one of the earliest converts to Methodism in that city. He was admitted on trial in 1774. With an interval of a few years, he travelled until 1786, when he located and settled in Brunswick. As a local preacher he was greatly useful. The blessing of God came upon his household, and he increased in worldly goods. In 1813 he wrote to his old friend and fellow laborer, Philip Gatch, "We are still living in old Brunswick, and nearly in the common way of the country. My five oldest children are professors, and in society. Our youngest child is sixteen years of age. He is moral, but not a professor yet. May the Lord bring him into the fold. Two of my sons are preachers. I am yet endeavoring to labor in my Master's vineyard."

He enjoyed a high social position, and some of his descendants have been distinguished for their eloquence and learning. One of his sons became eminent as a lawyer and politician, and was for a number of years a member of Congress; few men equalled him in that ready and persuasive eloquence that sways the populace and secures their confidence and support. One of his grandsons was an able Professor in Randolph Macon College in its earlier days, and stood high as a good and learned man.

The following interesting reminiscence of Dromgoole has been kindly contributed by Rev. Benjamin Devaney. They met at a camp meeting in North Carolina. "Mr. Dromgoole possessed a high order of intellect; he was plain in his dress, gentle and unassuming in his deportment, of deep piety, and of great moral worth. He was for piety, zeal and usefulness,

the embodiment of a primitive Methodist preacher. When he entered the stand to preach, he very deliberately put off his coat, and, I think his neck-cloth, which was nothing unusual with the old preachers of that day. He commenced by saying, "That the attention of the people may not be drawn off by inquiring who the preacher is, I will tell you. You recollect about thirty years ago, there was a young man who travelled here by the name of Edward Dromgoole; I am the man." His text was: "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God." The power of God was the burden of his theme, and when, by the force of his Irish eloquence, he carried us in imagination to the place "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," it was awfully sublime, it was beyond description. His voice, his countenance, and his gestures, all gave a power to his eloquence which is rarely equalled even at this day. The copious flow of tears, and the awful peals of his voice, showed that the preacher's whole soul was thrown into the subject, and it produced the most thrilling effect that I had ever witnessed. There was not a dry eye among the hundreds who listened to him on that occasion. In my long experience and close observation, I have never known a local preacher who maintained so noble a stand, and wielded so wide a moral influence as he did. With Wesley, Asbury, and all his other compeers in the ministry, he is reaping his glorious reward." He lived to see Methodism number its hundreds of thousands. He entered into rest in 1835, in the eighty-fourth year of his age.

The name of Isham Tatum first appears in 1776. He was for eight years a laborious pioneer in the new and hard fields of Virginia. He "desisted from travelling" in 1781, and settled in the upper part of the State, probably in Madison county, where he lived to a great age. At the time of his death, a few years ago, he was the oldest Methodist preacher in the United States, if not in the world. He left a large number of descendants, most of whom are members of the church their venerable ancestor labored to establish.

From the Leesburg Conference, May 19, 1778, eighteen preachers out of twenty-nine were sent into the Virginia field.

Fairfax, William Watters, Daniel Duvall; Berkeley, Edward Bailey; Hanover, Francis Poythress, Nicholas Watters; Fluvanna, Isham Tatum, Richard Ivy; Amelia, Reuben Ellis, Samuel Strong; Brunswick, John Dickins, Edward Pride; Sussex, Edward Dromgoole; Lunenburg, James Foster; Roanoke, William Glendenning; Pittsylvania, William Gill, John Major, Henry Willis; James City, Isaac Rollins.

The new circuits reported were Berkeley, Fluvanna, Lunenburg, Roanoke and James City.

The large proportion of preachers sent to Virginia shows the importance of the work in that direction.

The work of North Carolina was divided into three circuits, though in the minutes only Roanoke appears, the others were called Tar River, and New Hope. At this Conference not one of the English preachers was present. The storm of the Revolution had driven them all from the land, except Asbury, he lay in con-

cealment at Judge White's, in Delaware, praying and waiting for more quiet times. William Watters, the oldest American preacher, acted as President.

There is scarcely an historical trace left us of the state of the societies in Virginia between the Conferences of 1778 and 1779. Gatch states in his memoirs that he reported the Fluvanna circuit to the Leesburg Conference with a membership of two hundred and fifty. Jesse Lee says: "This was a year of distress and uncommon troubles. The war on one hand, and persecution on the other, the preachers were separated from their flocks, and all conspired to increase the burden of Christians." In comparing the returns of 1777 with those of 1779 (detailed returns being omitted in 1778) we find the increase in Virginia for the two to be only six hundred and sixty-five. In 1777 the reported members were, Fairfax, 330; Hanover, 262; Amelia, 620; Brunswick, 1,360; Sussex, 727; Pittsylvania, 150. In 1779 the numbers were: Fairfax, 309; Berkeley, 191; Fluvanna, 300; Hanover, 281; Amelia, 470; Sussex, 655; Brunswick, 656; Mecklenburg, 498; Pittsylvania, 500; Charlotte, 186; James City, 77. Total, 4,123.

The societies in Virginia were now being agitated by a question that threatened the most serious consequences to the unity of Methodism. We refer to the question of the Ordinances. As the discussion and adjustment of this question, form an epoch in the history of the Methodist Church in the State, we shall endeavor to give a comprehensive view of the whole matter in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

Conference at Broken-back Church—"Contest about the Ordinances"—Reasons which impelled the Methodists to seek the Ordinances at the hands of their own preachers—Decision of the Conference on the question—Efforts of Asbury to arrest the movement—Two Conferences in 1780—Strong opposition of the Conference at Baltimore to the measures of the Conference in Virginia—Asbury, Watters, and Garrettson sent to the Manakintown Conference—They offer conditions of union—Rejected by the Virginia preachers—Sad scenes—An unexpected compromise—Asbury makes a tour in Virginia and North Carolina—His unceasing labors—Plan for a Kingswood school—John Dickens—Happy result of Asbury's visit in quieting the people on the subject of the Ordinances.

THE seventh Conference, held at Roger Thompson's, near the Broken-back Church, in Fluvanna county, May 18, 1779, determined a question that had for several years agitated the Methodist societies, especially in the South. This question was the "contest about the Ordinances."

The labors of Wesley's missionaries had been signally blessed. More than eight thousand members, upwards of fifty itinerants, besides a host of zealous local preachers and exhorters, were the rich fruits gathered in little more than ten years. But the position of this large body of Christians was anomalous. They had a pure faith, a talented, and zealous, and devoted ministry; strict and well administered discipline; plans, the best ever devised for the spread of gospel truth; and, indeed, all the essentials of a powerful Christian association. But technically they

were not a Church. There was not a preacher from Asbury down, that could administer the Holy Sacrament, celebrate the rites of matrimony, or baptize a child. These rites they were compelled to seek at the hands of the Established Clergy. But many of these, indeed, the majority of them, were men of loose principles and bad habits. In many parishes the immorality of the ministers was notorious. Instead of being patterns of piety, they were examples of dissoluteness; instead of reverence, they received the ridicule of the people. When a body of men professing to be ministers of Christ, break from all restraint of gospel principles, and attend races, cock-fights, fox-hunts; when they drink wine to excess, sit up all night at card parties, and "ridicule experimental religion as bigotry and superstition," can it be thought strange that a pious mind should revolt against such a class, and spurn them as spiritual guides, although they may have felt the pressure of prelatic hands, and stand as links in the chain of a fancied succession. "As a body," says Dr. Hawkes, a very high and competent authority on this subject, "the clergy were anything but invulnerable."

Look at this picture of the times of which we write. "Who is there?" said a clergyman on the Middlesex side of the Rappahannock, aroused before day on Christmas morning by a loud knocking at his door.

"We have brought a criminal from the other side of the river."

"Bring him in," said he, striking a light.

"Who is he, and what has he been doing?"

"It is I," said a man, staggering into the room.

It was indeed a clergyman from the opposite shore, who excited by his potations, had been disturbing the peaceable citizens.

"Ah, is it you? What are you doing out at this time of night?" Provoked at being disturbed, he added, "Well you shall pay your fine or take your stripes, as the law directs." The fine was paid and the parson put across the river. These men were old cronies, and had often caroused together.

"I remember well," said a gentleman, "when a little boy, seeing Parson G. at our house, and often after dinner he was put in the gig by the servants, and by the order of my father tied in, and a servant went along to lead the horse and conduct him home, as he was unable to take care of himself from his indulgence at the table, to which he had been invited after church service on Sabbath."

Such, with a few honorable exceptions, was the character of the men to whom the Methodists in Virginia and elsewhere, had to look for the administration of the sacraments. Jarratt, good and true man as he was, travelled far and wide to give the societies the benefit of the ordinances, but he could not keep pace with the rapid strides of Methodism.

On all sides the preachers pressed into the "regions beyond." Almost from the beginning, the people felt the need of the ordinances, and forced the question upon the attention of the preachers; but they, trained in Wesley's school, could not for a moment think of incurring his displeasure by departing from his plans. Had there been Fletchers, and Grimshaws, and Perronets in America, the case might have been

different. But no zealous churchman passed through the land preaching, baptizing and giving the Holy Communion to the poor sheep in the wilderness. Let us calmly look back upon those times. "Placing ourselves," says Dr. Lee, "in the times of which we write, unless we would excommunicate Christ from his high priesthood in the church, and his headship over it, we must maintain that the man of loose principles and worse habits, ordained by the Bishop of London and sent to Virginia as a minister, was in every attribute of the office, whether of personal fitness or official authority, inferior to the ministers of Methodism in every essential qualification for the administration of Christian ordinances." But there was a higher question than that of official, or even superior spiritual qualifications, which the Methodists had to decide.

It was a question of "conscience between relinquishing their Christian birthright altogether, or of seeking communion with Christ in ordinances administered by men of selfish feelings and vicious life." But few could hesitate with such a question before them. Besides, these Methodists could not doubt, that the men who had been instrumental in bringing them to Christ for salvation, possessed, in virtue of their sacred call, the right to bring them into his visible Church by baptism, and to dispense to them the emblems of his dying love. As believers in Christ they felt they had a right to the "divinely instituted ordinances," and they were willing and anxious to receive them at the hands of those whose right to administer them rested upon a call to the ministerial

office, which had been put above all human questionings by the sanction of the Holy Ghost in the conversion of multitudes of souls. In their views, the great right to preach the gospel involved the lesser right to administer its appointed ordinances. But there were other considerations to be taken into the account. All through Virginia the Baptists and Presbyterians were rapidly spreading. Their preachers not only formed societies, but in the proper sense organized churches. When confronted by these men the Methodist preachers felt their official inferiority. In all things else they were equal to the best ministers among the dissenting sects; but in respect to the ordinances, there was a painful and embarrassing inequality. This, doubtless, had its influence on the minds of both preachers and people.

Besides, the war was raging, and all connection was broken off with the Mother Country. It was impossible to tell how long hostilities might continue; the societies were greatly weakened, in some places almost broken up. There was a felt necessity for some measure that should give them the character and permanency of a Christian Church. Nothing was to be expected from Wesley. The Methodists knew him to be a staunch Episcopalian, and uncompromisingly opposed to all steps looking toward a separation from the Established Church. They must have known that "for many years" he had been importuned to exercise the right of ordination; and that he had steadily refused; that he desired indeed that the American societies should consider themselves as belonging to the Church of England. Let it also be

remembered that this demand for ordinances was not from a discontented faction. It was the urgent appeal of a large majority of the Methodist societies.

In 1775, there were 2,192 members north of the Potomac River, and only 955 south of it. The next year there were 1,782 in the north and 3,139 in the south. In 1777, 4,379 were reported from the south and 2,589 from the north; the following year the proportion was probably the same; the minutes give the whole in the aggregate. In 1779, there were 2,987 in the north, and 5,490 in the south. In 1780, the numbers were 5,339 in the south, and 3,165 in the north.

In this comparison, we have made the Potomac the dividing line, though it is highly probable that many of the Maryland Methodists approved of the measures of their more southern brethren. At the first Conference it was found necessary "to press the people of Virginia and Maryland" to receive the ordinances at the hands of the Parish Clergy. To show how soon after the planting of Methodism, this question of the sacraments sprung up in the societies, we shall quote from the minutes of the first Conference more fully.

It was unanimously agreed that "Every preacher who acts in connection with Mr. Wesley, and the brethren who labor in America, is strictly to avoid administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper."

"All the people among whom we labour to be earnestly exhorted to attend the church, and receive the ordinances there; but in a particular manner to

press the people in Maryland and Virginia to the observance of this minute." From this we cannot fail to understand where the strongest feeling prevailed on the question of ordinances. The explanation of this Conference action is, that Strawbridge, and others in Maryland, were strongly in favor of meeting the wants of the people. Indeed, there is more than a hint in Asbury's journal that some of the preachers had yielded to their solicitation. Under date of December 22, 1772, he says that at a quarterly meeting held in Maryland, the question was asked: "Will the people be contented without our administering the the Sacrament?" He then says: "J. K." [John King] "was neuter;" brother S. [Strawbridge] pleaded much for the ordinances; and so did the people, who appeared to be much biased by him. I told them that I would not agree to it at that time, and insisted on our abiding by our rules. But Mr. B. [who this was is not known] had given them their way at the quarterly meeting held here before, and I was obliged to connive at some things for the sake of peace." Whoever this Mr. B. was, it seems clear from this, that he had yielded to the people, and administered the holy sacrament. In no other sense can we understand Asbury's declaration that he had "given the people their way," and that he had been compelled "to connive at some things for the sake of peace." It required all the influence of Asbury to arrest these proceedings. But the question was not allowed to slumber. At the Conference of 1775 it came up again and found many advocates. "It was with considerable difficulty," says Walters, "that a

large majority was prevailed upon to lay it over again till the next Conference." The anxiety to adopt some measure of relief is explained by Freeborn Garrettson. He says: "Many places, especially in the South, were entirely destitute of a settled ministry of any denomination. The Methodist preachers were not allowed to perform even the rites of the burial of their dead." No reference indeed is made to the subject in the minutes, from the first Conference to that of 1780; but we learn from the journals of the old preachers, that it came up at almost every Conference that was held in this interval. It was a subject of inquiry at the Deer Creek Conference in Maryland. The question was, "What shall be done with respect to the ordinances?" The answer was, "Our next Conference will, if God permit, show us more clearly."

At the ensuing Conference at Leesburg, the same question was asked, and the answer was, "We unanimously agree to refer it to the next Conference."

These repeated Conference debates, together with the discussions going on among the people, naturally excited both preachers and members to a high degree on this absorbing question. It could no longer be staved off. The decision was made at the Conference of 1779, in the fear of God, and with an earnest desire to promote the cause of religion. We are indebted to the journal of Philip Gatch, one of the leaders in the movement, for an account of the proceedings. After the usual business had been dispatched, a general discussion arose on the question of administering the ordinances. The conclusions reached were embodied in a series of questions and answers.

"What are our reasons for taking up the administration of the ordinances?"

Answer: "Because the Episcopal establishment is now dissolved, and, therefore, in almost all our circuits the members are without the ordinances.

"What preachers do approve of this step?

Answer: "Isham Tatum, Charles Hopkins, Nelson Reed, Reuben Ellis, Philip Gatch, Thomas Morris, James Morris, James Foster, John Major, Andrew Yeargin, Henry Willis, Francis Poythress, John Sagman, Leroy Cole, Carter Cole, James O'Kelly, William Moore, Samuel Roe.

"Is it proper to have a committee?

"Yes, and by a vote of the Conference.

"Who are the committee?

"Philip Gatch, James Foster, Leroy Cole and Reuben Ellis.

"What power do the preachers vest in the committee?

"They agree to observe all the resolutions of the said committee, so far as the said committee shall adhere to the Scriptures.

"What form of ordination shall be observed to authorize any preacher to administer?

"By that of a presbytery.

"How shall the presbytery be appointed?

"By a majority of the preachers.

"Who are the presbytery?

"Philip Gatch, Reuben Ellis, James Foster, and, in case of necessity, Leroy Cole.

"What power is vested in the presbytery by this choice?

"First, to administer the ordinances themselves; second, to authorize any other preacher or preachers, approved of by them, by the form of laying on of hands.

"What is to be observed as touching the administration of the ordinances, and to whom shall they be administered?"

"To those who are under our care and discipline.

"Shall we re-baptize any under our care?

"No.

"What mode shall we adopt for the administration of baptism?

Either sprinkling or plunging, as the parents or adult may choose.

"What ceremony shall be used in the administration?

"Let it be according to our Lord's commandment—Matthew xxviii: 19—short and extempore.

"Shall the sign of the cross be used?

"No.

"Who shall receive the charge of the child after baptism for its future instruction?

"The parent, or the person having the care of the child, with advice from the preacher.

"What mode shall be adopted for the administration of the Lord's Supper?

"Kneeling is thought the most proper, but in case of conscience, may be left to the choice of the communicant.

"What ceremony shall be observed in this ordinance?

"After singing, prayer, and exhortation, the

preacher shall deliver the bread, saying, 'The body of our Lord Jesus Christ,' etc., after the Church order."

Such were the measures adopted after mature deliberation and earnest prayer.

The Conference had the unquestionable right to do what is here recorded. It was clothed with plenary power as the regularly constituted session for that year. "There was a meeting of preachers," says Gatch, "held in Kent, Delaware, on the 28th of April, 1779, who were opposed to the action above stated, and with the view to counteract it; but their meeting was not a regular Conference of preachers, in connection with the Rev. John Wesley, although it was so asserted in their minutes." Asbury was kept from the Fluvanna Conference, by the same causes that had prevented his attendance at Leesburg, but his absence in no wise abridged the power of the body. Nor did his presence at the meeting in Delaware invest it with any superiority. Indeed, this meeting was called mainly for the purpose of devising some means for arresting the anticipated action at the regular Conference in Virginia.

Asbury felt deeply on the subject; but there is no proof that he doubted the abstract right of the Methodist societies to provide themselves with the ordinances in the manner proposed in the South. He doubted the expediency of the measures, and feared that a rupture between the North and the South would result. He wrote urgent letters to the leading preachers in Virginia, appealing to them "to prevent, if possible, a separation." He had great hopes that the

breach would be healed; otherwise he feared the worst consequences.

But the tide was too strong to be stayed by the influence, even of Asbury. He writes: "I received the minutes of the Virginia Conference, by which I learn the preachers there have been effecting a lame separation from the Episcopal Church." He pitied them, and predicted that it would last about a year. The preachers North were, almost to a man, opposed to the action of the Conference, and it met with the disapproval of a portion of the preachers and members in the South. Some of the older Methodists refused to receive the sacrament at the hands of their own ministers, and adhered to their old customs. A few preachers, who dissented from the action of the Conference, took their stations North among those that agreed with them in sentiments. The new plan was put in operation at once. The Committee ordained each other, and set apart other preachers, "that they might administer the holy ordinances to the Church of Christ." The leaders in this measure were pious, able, and zealous men, in whom the people reposed all confidence. Their labors were greatly blessed, many souls were gathered into the church, "and Christians were very lively in religion." This tended to confirm them in the belief that they had acted wisely and with Divine approval, in determining to administer the ordinances. There was but little hope that they would recede from their position. As the year closed the prospect for an adjustment of the question became more gloomy. The demon of dis-

cord was at work; the returns showed a slight falling off in the memberships.

At the Conference of 1779 other important changes were made. The form of the minutes were altered, and, "Who are admitted on trial?" was made the first question; up to this time it had been, "Who are admitted into connection?" Before this Conference, it had been the practice to receive preachers into full connection after one year's trial; the time was now extended to two years; and if the Conference doubted the piety, gifts, and usefulness of the candidate, they "continued him on trial for three years or longer." Jesse Lee says that the question, "Who desist from travelling?" was asked this year for the first time. It appears in the minutes of the "little Conference," held in Delaware, but not in those of the regular Conference in Virginia. It may have been asked at the latter, and omitted in the record. Before this no notice had been taken of the preachers who "desisted from travelling." Their names were simply dropped from the roll. The Conference agreed to consider all preachers expelled from the connection who should take money by subscription.

Two Conferences were held in the spring of 1780. One of the Northern preachers, at Baltimore, April 24th; another of the Southern preachers, at Manakin town, Powhatan county, Virginia, May 9th. Asbury was hard at work devising conciliatory measures. On his way to the Conference at Baltimore he "proposed some conditions for a partial reconciliation, in hopes to bring on a real one in Virginia."

At the Conference, Philip Gatch and Reuben Ellis appeared as messengers from the South, and presented a letter. They were coldly received; not a word of sympathy was uttered; there was every appearance of an entire separation. William Watters was the only man that treated them with affection and tenderness. According to Asbury the Conference at first concluded to renounce them. Then he offered conditions of union: "1. That they should ordain no more. 2. That they should come no farther than Hanover circuit. 3. We would have our delegates in their Conference. 4. That they should not presume to administer the ordinances where there is a decent Episcopal minister. 5. To have a union Conference." A long debate followed; these proposals failed. They then came back to their determination to renounce the Southern preachers; "although," says Asbury, "it was like death to think of parting."

In this painful state of things a thought struck him. He proposed a suspension of the ordinances for one year. It was agreed to by both parties. Gatch and Ellis thought it would do no harm. Asbury, Watters, and Garrettson, were appointed a committee to attend the Conference in Virginia.

If the proposed suspension should be agreed to, then all the preachers were to meet at the next annual Conference at Baltimore. Asbury went on this mission with a heavy heart; he feared "the violence of a party of positive men." The committee met a reception quite different from that of Gatch and Ellis at Baltimore. "We found our brethren," says Wat-

ters, "as loving and as full of zeal as ever, and as fully determined on persevering in their newly adopted mode; for to all their former adjustments, they now added, what with many was infinitely stronger than all the arguments in the world, that the Lord approved, and had blessed his own ordinances, by them administered the past year." When the Conference met, the committee stood back. They were invited in, and Asbury spoke. He read Wesley's thoughts on separation; showed Wesley's letters of instruction to him; then read the sentiments of the Conferences in Delaware and at Baltimore; he also read other papers bearing on the question, and urged a peaceable settlement. They proposed to desist, if he would supply the circuits; this he could not do. They then adjourned for preaching. Asbury's text was: "And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you, and they answered him, The Lord bless thee." He preached as though "nothing had been the matter among the preachers or people." There was mutual pleasure and edification, and "some moving among the people." In the afternoon session they were farther apart than in the morning. Asbury thought there had been "some talking out of doors." The committee then withdrew and left the Conference to consider their conditions. In an hour they were called in; the answer was, "We cannot submit to the terms of union." They withdrew from the house in great sorrow. "I prepared to leave," says Asbury, "under the heaviest cloud I ever felt in America. O! what I felt! nor I alone! but the

agents on both sides! they wept like children, but they kept their opinions." His two associates labored with him most earnestly.

"We had," says Watters, "a great deal of loving conversation, with many tears; but I saw no bitterness, no shyness, no judging each other. We wept, and prayed, and sobbed, but neither would agree to the other's terms." Each believed he was acting for the best interests of the Church of God. They were divided in opinion, but they were one in the knowledge and love of God. Two days were spent in fruitless efforts to heal the breach. Before they parted one last appeal was made to heaven. Asbury had been praying "as with a broken heart;" he rose from his knees and went to bid the Conference farewell. In the meanwhile, Garrettson and Watters had been wrestling with the Lord in a room directly over that in which the Conference was deliberating. When he entered he "found that they had come to an agreement. Great was the joy. Watters took the stand and preached on the words: "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." A love-feast followed, in which preachers and people wept, and prayed, and talked, until the spirit of re-union came down upon them like "the dew of Hermon that descended upon the mountains of Zion." "Surely," says Asbury, "the hand of God was greatly seen in all this." The terms of settlement were, that for the sake of peace, and to preserve the unity of Methodism, they should suspend the ordinances until Wesley could be consulted. The work of God had suffered in Virginia in the midst of the troubles

which threatened the peace of the Church. The returns from the circuits showed a membership of 5,928; a loss of 200 from the preceding year.

Singularly enough, the records of this important Conference are omitted in the minutes, while those of the "little meeting" in Delaware, in 1779, are inserted. There can be no question that the Conference at Manakintown had equal claims, to say the least, to be considered a legal Conference as that held at Baltimore. Dr. Lee plausibly supposes, "that as the breach in the Church was healed in Virginia, it was mutually agreed to omit all mention in the minutes of the Conference at which it was effected."

After the close of the Conference, Asbury spent five months travelling and preaching in Virginia and North Carolina. He first reached Petersburg. Here he found religion on the decline. He feared the members were growing unholy. While resting he wrote to Wesley, giving him an account of the recent adjustment of the difficulties about ordinances. There is little doubt that Wesley was at this time, approaching that decision which a few years afterwards gave to the world the Methodist Episcopal Church.

From Petersburg, Asbury made a tour through the old battle-fields of Methodism, Brunswick, Sussex, Dinwiddie, &c. He preached at Nathaniel Lee's, to a small company, while a muster and cock-fight were going on not far off. He rode on to George Booth's who was a "curious genius for a mechanic." At Nottoway church he met with Jarratt, who preached an excellent sermon, but "was rather shackled with

his notes." He preached at "the widow Heath's," where God moved upon the hearts of the people. There seemed to be a call for him in every part of the work. He was now travelling to keep peace and union. "O," says he, "if a rent and separation had taken place, what work, what hurt to thousands of souls! It is now stopped, and if it had not it might have been my fault; it may have been my fault that it took place; but I felt a timidity that I could not get over; preachers and people making the trial, they see the consequences, and I hope will do so no more. They have suffered for their forwardness. May we all be more prudent."

He pushed on and came to the great preaching-house in Nansemond. It had been converted from a store-house into a church. He preached to three hundred people. They made a collection for him, but he refused to take it, lest they should say he came for money. There was a good prospect here; nearly one hundred had joined the society. From county to county he passed, preaching in private houses, in chapels, and barns; these latter were often the only preaching places possessed by the Methodists in some quarters. In this tour Asbury preached in "Jones' barn," "Jarratt's barn," "Woolsey's barn," "Walker's barn," &c.; the meeting houses mentioned are, "Mabry's," "White Oak," Merritt's," &c. Some of the names of those in whose houses this truly apostolic man preached the word of life may be interesting to those of their descendants who still survive.

"William Graves'," "Wood Tucker's," "Robert Jones," "George Smith's," "Gillum Booth's," "Ben-

jamin Johnson's," "Mrs. Merritt's," "Mark Crowder's," were places honored by his presence and blessed by his preaching.

It was during this tour, and in North Carolina, that the first step was taken towards founding a Methodist institution of learning. At a "Brother Bustion's," Asbury preached in company with John Dickins. While resting a day or two from their toils, "Dickins drew a subscription for a Kingswood school in America; this was what came out a college in the subscription printed by Dr. Coke. Gabriel Long and Brother Bustion were the first subscribers, which I hope will be for the glory of God and the good of thousands." Asbury in a few bold strokes gives us a picture of Dickins. "He is a man of great piety, great skill in learning, drinks in Greek and Latin swiftly; yet prays much, and walks close with God. He is a gloomy countryman of mine, and very diffident of himself." The field over which he was now travelling seemed very inviting to Asbury. He says: "I have thought if I had two horses and Harry (a colored man) to go with me and drive one and meet the black people, and to spend about six months in Virginia and the Carolinas, it would be attended with a blessing." His spirit was pained, however, at the utter neglect of religion in many places. The people seemed to be dead to spiritual things, while "their minds and mouths were full of the world." The congregations that met him were inattentive; the troubles of the war filled their thoughts, and the seed fell on stony soil, or among briers and thorns, and but little fruit was brought to perfection. Never had he met with

greater difficulties than on this tour, but his soul was kept in peace, and he labored on, "hoping for the greater blessing."

Though unsurpassed in any age of the Church for piety and zeal, a genial humor marked the character of Asbury. He says: "I was condemned for telling humorous anecdotes, and knew not whether it was guilt or fear, lest my friends should think I go beyond the bounds of prudent liberty."

Scarcely a day passed during his progress that Asbury was not preaching, meeting the classes, urging the leading laymen to pray and labor for the unity and peace of the Church, writing letters to distant preachers, or storing his mind with knowledge from good books. With a feeble frame, he boldly pressed on over rocks, hills, creeks and rivers, through pathless woods and marshy lowlands; he forced his way through thickets, twisting and bending the limbs and saplings aside, where no trace of a man was to be found. The people in many places were as wild as the deer in their forests; sometimes he had to ride thirty miles for food and lodging. For miles as he rode along, he could see no house better than a rude log hut. The people were poor, and cruel to each other; they came to the meetings, some drunk, others with guns in their hands; some families were starving for want of bread, while many who had grain, distilled it into poisonous whiskey. He felt that he dwelt among "briers, thorns and scorpions."

But he went with the same message to the polished and the rude; to him they were all sinners, needing the touch of atoning blood to cleanse and renew them.

Besides his travels in Virginia, he passed through Cumberland, Chatham, Orange and Wake counties in North Carolina. This was the roughest and most dangerous part of his tour. What was it to him if the fare was coarse, his place of devotion "an old log shop," his church "a log house covered with long shingles, the sun beating through" in August, and five hundred people packed in and around it? What was it to him if, after a ride of thirty miles, and preaching two or three times, he should find his resting place "a cabin, an earthen floor, and a damp bed?" The coarse fare he received with gratitude—in the "old log shop" he and his brethren prayed, "and found their hearts sweetly united together"—in the "log house with the sun beating through," he was blest while he preached, "and the word went with power"—and, though on the floor of the cabin, the "pain in his head" kept him from sleeping, his thoughts soared away to the land where a rest remaineth for the people of God. What was it to him that he dragged a sickly body through a thousand miles of travel—that now he was burning with a fever, and anon shaking with an ague, that for a week he would be so unwell as to make travelling a burden, and standing in the sun a few moments like scorching his brain—that he forded deep and dangerous water courses with "the horse covered all but his head, and the flood rushing angrily through the carriage"—that he must "swim the horses over Birche's Creek, and bring the carriage over the shattered bridge"—that he should exclaim, "Ah! what troubles have I passed through! What sickness! What temptations!"—that

he should stand and preach an hour or more to four or five hundred people with a burning fever on him, and feel that he was ready to weep over them? What were all these hardships to this great, good, this self-denying, this truly apostolic man?

He was doing the work of God; he felt safe in this work. "Daily travelling and other labors will humble me." . . . . . "I am kept in resignation and faith, and praying that God may bless my labors, and bring peace and union among the Methodists in Virginia." Asbury came out of this campaign in a sad plight. A slow fever preyed upon him; his clothes were torn and ragged; his horses poor and jaded, and his carriage broken, and patched and mended in divers places. His kind Virginia friends repaired his clothes, gave him a new suit of homespun, and again put him in a condition to resume his journey.

This visit of Asbury to the circuits where the greatest excitement prevailed on the subject of the ordinances was attended with very favorable results. He calmed the minds of the more violent preachers and members, and diffused the spirit of his own exalted piety wherever he went; they did not, however, lose sight of the fact that Wesley was to be written to, and urged to send them ministers who could administer the holy sacraments. Accordingly, before Asbury left the State, he again wrote to Wesley on the subject. "The answer to this letter," says the editor of his journal, "was made through Dr. Coke, Richard Whatcoat, and Thomas Vasey, in 1784, who all came to America properly ordained." This writer presumes

that Wesley received few letters from America in which the question of ordinances was not pressed upon his attention.

Turning his face northward, Asbury passed on through Powhatan, Goochland, Fluvanna, Amherst and Albemarle. At Manakintown he preached to five hundred people; thence he made his way to "Dukes," in Goochland; here his travelling companion, Edward Bailey, fell sick; still they toiled on and found rest at the house of Roger Thompson, in Fluvanna, where the famous "Broken-backed Conference" was held. We next find them in Amherst at "brother Hopkins;" here Bailey became too ill to travel further. Asbury left him in the care of kind friends, and pushed on to meet his appointments. He speaks of preaching at Maupin's and Frettwell's, in Albemarle; at Henry Fry's, Roberts' and other places in Madison. Here he turned upon his track and returned to Fluvanna. At the Broken-backed Church he received the sad news of poor Bailey's death. A violent bilious fever took him off in the strength of his days. His testimony to the goodness of God was clear and strong to the last. Weak and faint he would kneel in the bed and pray touchingly and powerfully. His wife, children, and sister he commended to the care of his dear friend Asbury, and then fell asleep in Jesus. He was received on trial at the Leesburg Conference, and was the first preacher appointed to the Berkeley circuit. Having married, he followed the custom of that day, and "desisted from travelling." Asbury met with him in North Carolina and urged him to reënter the regular work; he at

once consented, and was on his way to a field of labor in the north, when he was arrested by the hand of death. Asbury deeply felt the loss of his friend, for their hearts were knit together in love. He says: "I travel very heavily now; I have lost my poor Bailey; so suddenly called away! If my affections were naturally tender, I should be bathed in tears, for I have great cause to weep. I am almost ready to say none shall ride with me hereafter."

After a short journey through Hanover, preaching at the "widow Granger's," (properly Crenshaw) "Ground Squirrell," and other places, he crossed the Pamunky a little below the Court House, "came to Parrett's, at Stafford Court House," where he paid eight Continental dollars for supper and lodging, and thence by Dumfries, Colchester and Alexandria, to Georgetown. He had finished a tour of more than a thousand miles, and reached his friend Gough's in Maryland without a cent in his pocket. Mr. Gough and Mrs Chamier had given him three guineas and two half johannas" for the trip; of this "two guineas and a half, and a half crown went in Virginia." He gave them the gospel, and though they offered money, he refused it, and came away with the sweet consciousness of having labored successfully for Christ and his cause. Never was there a more unselfish being than Francis Asbury. The pure flame that burned in his heart consumed all dross and made the gold to reflect in a holy light, clear, distinct, the image of Christ. Looking back upon this arduous journey he says: "I am happy in the review of my labors; in the reflection that my heart is in the work of God; and that it is not in

vain." But still he felt that if he had the wings of a dove he would, if the Master allowed, fly away and be at rest. Reposing after the last long ride of this tour, in the bosom of a Christian family, he writes: "I was blessed in the family I put up with. O, how sweet is rest! But O, for eternal rest!"

CHAPTER V.

Opening of the Slavery Question—Influence of Mr. Wesley's opinions—Action of the Conference at Baltimore—The apple of discord thrown down—Conference of 1781—Important measures of Church economy adopted—The churches in Virginia—Desolations of War—Asbury again in the State—His description of Weyer's Cave—His incessant labors—Conference at Ellis' Meeting House—Final settlement of the question of Ordinances—Method of equalizing quarterage receipts—Asbury chosen to preside over the Conferences—His travels in the circuits—Conference of 1782 at Ellis'—Adjourned to meet at Baltimore—Action on slavery—Decided measures against intemperance—Close of the War—Spread of Methodism—Conference of 1784—Arrival of Dr. Coke—Call for a General Conference.

IF the Conference at Baltimore in 1780 was fortunate in proposing measures which closed the contest about ordinances, it was equally unfortunate in opening another question that has been ever since a fruitful source of trouble. We refer to the question of slavery. This whole subject we should pass over in silence, but for its intimate connection with the progress of Methodism in Virginia. It is not difficult to mark the steps by which the early preachers reached a decision on this question. Although the first official action was had at this Conference, the leaven of anti-slavery had been working for years among the Methodists. The English preachers brought with them a zeal against slavery as one of the great evils of the age. It was but natural that

they should infuse their opinions into the societies that grew up under their labors. Gradually, but firmly, the conviction grew that slavery was wrong. A powerful stimulant was applied by the publication of Wesley's "Thoughts upon Slavery," in the year 1774. This appeal, written in the strongest words of the language, painting, in the darkest colors, the horrors of the slave-trade, and the sufferings of the negroes in the West Indies, was scattered over England, and of course found its way to this country. It made a profound impression on the followers of Wesley. His was a voice they had ever heard with reverence. And now, when it was raised against a system which he proclaimed to be "the vilest that ever saw the sun," they shuddered to think of the fearful responsibilities they incurred in sustaining such a system in their midst. This feeling of hostility to slavery was strongest in the northern circuits, among those preachers and members who had been more intimately associated with the English missionaries.

But there were other causes that operated to bring the subject to an issue. The great revivals in the South had drawn thousands of slaveholders into the societies; many of these, gifted and zealous, had been licensed as local preachers, and some were enrolled in the ranks of the travelling preachers. Methodism at that time was gathering her richest harvests in the South, and it became a serious question whether she should quietly incorporate slavery into her ecclesiastical system, or arrest it at once by bold and prompt action. When men are considering one real

or fancied grievance, it is easy to pass to the examination of another. Nothing was more natural than for the Conference of 1780, at Baltimore, composed wholly of Northern preachers, to pass from the question of ordinances to the question of slavery.

The conclusions reached contained no absolute prohibition of slavery either on the part of the preachers or members. And yet it is almost certain that the Conference expected that its action should be regarded by the societies as a law on the subject. It was the custom to express all the more important decisions in the form of questions and answers. The question stated what the Conference deemed it right and proper to do; the answer expressed the determination to do what was involved in the question as a duty, and was equivalent to a rule of action for all, preachers and people.

The first question in reference to slavery was this: "Ought not this Conference to require those travelling preachers who hold slaves to give promise to set them free?" This, according to the custom of that day, was regarded as binding the preachers just as strongly as if the form had been, "This Conference does require," &c.

The question that bore especially upon the laity was so framed as to give in the clearest and strongest terms the Conference view of slavery.

"Does this Conference acknowledge that slavery is contrary to the laws of God, man, and nature, and hurtful to society; contrary to the dictates of conscience and pure religion, and doing that which we

would not others should do to us and ours? Do we pass our disapprobation on all our friends who keep slaves, and advise their freedom?"

"Yes."

There is a marked difference in the questions as they refer respectively to the travelling preachers and "our friends," the laity. In one case the Conference "requires," in the other it "advises." After so formidable an indictment, who would have supposed that the action would close with the gentle word "advise." Can any one divine a reason for this egregious discrepancy between premises and conclusion? To the minds of the preachers the whole question must have been environed with difficulties. They certainly were sincere men. They believed in their hearts that slavery was a great wrong. In their own ranks they struck at it boldly. A requisition was laid upon every travelling preacher who was connected with it to free himself from it. But the membership they must approach more cautiously. A picture was drawn that should startle every one that looked upon it. The strong disapprobation of the spiritual guides of Methodism was stamped upon an institution, which, in their opinion, violated every law of God, man, and nature. Thus the whole moral power of the Conference was cast against slavery. It was put under ban as a thing in the highest degree odious in the sight of God. It is morally certain that the Conference would not have been satisfied with merely giving advice in respect to slavery as defined by them, unless there had been a clear conviction that mandatory measures would

meet with strong opposition from the people. But even in advisory action they overshot the mark. Thoughtful men could not fail to see that if they were involved in so great a sin as the Conference had made slavery by their indictments, they were utterly unworthy of a place in the Church of God; nay, that they merited his heaviest displeasure, and must sink under his curse. They could not believe that the simple relation of master and slave carried along with it such fearful results. Irritation and strife were the legitimate fruits of this unwise action. The people felt that the preachers had transcended the limits of ministerial authority, in presuming to pronounce judgment on an institution established and guarded by constitutional authority.

Jesse Lee assures us, that "the preachers in this case went too far in their censures; and their language, in their resolves, was calculated to irritate the minds of the people, and by no means calculated to convince them of their errors." The action of the Conference, however, had its influence with many persons. In the memoir of Philip Gatch the form of his deed of emancipation has been preserved. He was living at the time in Powhatan county; and with two or three of his neighbors, determined to free his slaves. The deed runs thus:

"Know all men by these presents, that I, Philip Gatch, of Powhatan county, do believe that all men are by nature equally free; and from a clear conviction of the injustice of depriving my fellow creatures of their natural rights, do hereby emancipate, or set free, the following persons," &c. The names of nine

slaves then follow; the deed was executed in December 1780. The form is, perhaps, the usual one adopted by the Methodists of that day.

The apple of discord was thrown between the North and the South by the action of this Conference; and a conflict inaugurated, which sixty-four years afterwards, reached its disastrous issue in the division of the Church. Happy had it been for Methodism, had the fathers never touched the question of slavery.

Other measures of less importance were adopted at this Conference. The preachers were to see that all meeting houses were properly settled on trustees, and deeds for the same recorded; every preacher was to have a written license from the Conference signed by Asbury; every local preacher and exhorter was to have his license renewed quarterly," and to be examined by the assistant with respect to his life, his qualification, and reception;" all preachers were to make it a matter of conscience to rise at four or five o'clock, and it was declared to be a shame for a preacher to be in bed at six in the morning; preachers' wives were to receive the same amount of quarterage as their husbands, if they stood in need; the practice of distilling grain into liquor was reprobated, and those who persisted in it were to be disowned as Methodists; the preachers were to meet the colored people in classes, and in their absence were to appoint proper white leaders, "and not suffer them to stay late and meet by themselves."

There are no records of extensive revivals in Virginia during the years 1779 and 1780. The war was fiercely raging in the South; the country was filled

with alarms and the marching and counter-marching of armed men, kept the people in a constant state of excitement.

There were gracious visitations, however, in some localities. Gatch mentions a revival of much interest in Powhatan county. It was felt with power among Methodists and Baptists. The ranks of the itinerancy received several valuable accessions from this work. Daniel Asbury, Lewis Chastain, Richard Pope, Bennett Maxey and Daniel Lockett, from the same neighborhood in Powhatan, joined the Conference.

The name of Henry Ogburn appears on the minutes of 1779 as received on trial; but it is not found among the preachers stationed that year. There was probably an over supply and he was left without an appointment, to be called into service whenever needed. Ogburn was born in Mecklenburg county, and was converted in the great revival of 1776. He labored with great zeal and success for ten years as an itinerant. He was sent as a pioneer to the Kentucky circuit, and amid savage tribes he planted Methodism, preaching to the hardy settlers in their "stations," or little forts, and sowing seed from which rose the Methodist Church in Kentucky.

Among the settlers at "Kenton's Station" were Thomas and Sarah Stevenson, parents of Dr. Stevenson, widely known as our former book agent. In their humble cabin the missionary found a home, and there was formed the first Methodist Society in Kentucky. Ogburn spent several years in Western Virginia, and his preaching was signally blessed.

In Botetourt there was a powerful revival. Among the converts was Edward Mitchel, a leading man in that portion of the State. He became a local preacher, and for many years blessed the Church with his labors. Ogburn, having married, located in the year 1790, and finally settled in Kentucky. He sustained the character of a faithful and zealous local preacher until his death, in 1831.

The Conference for 1781 was held at Baltimore. The whole number of members reported was 10,539. Of this number 5,232 were in the South; in Virginia 3,239, in North Carolina 1,993. The increase for the year was 2,035. This was almost wholly in the North; there was a small decrease in the South, owing to the war, which disturbed the societies, interrupted the regular preaching, and drew many of the members into the ranks of the army. Isle of Wight was the only circuit added in Virginia. Several important measures were passed at this Conference. Persons were to remain on trial three months, before they could be admitted as regular members. This is the first reference to this subject in the minutes. Expelled members who sought re-admission, must first give satisfactory proof of their repentance, and be recommended by the society. Preachers were required often to read the Rules of the Societies, the Character of a Methodist and the Plain Account of Christian Perfection; the preachers were also required to give a circumstantial account of their circuits in writing, both of societies and local preachers, with a plan to their successors; they were to inform the societies of the amounts needed for quarterage, and to

urge them to give liberally. For the first time a rule was adopted for settling business disputes. "Let the assistant preacher at quarterly meeting consult with the steward in appointing proper persons to examine into the circumstances, and if there be any suspicion of injustice or inability in the referees, to appoint men of more skill and probity, and the parties to abide by their decision, or be excluded the society." The Conference recommended four general fast days to be observed by all the societies on the first Thursdays in June, September, January and April. Nineteen preachers were sent to Virginia.

The year that followed this Conference was marked by few revivals in the South. There were tokens for good in some parts of Virginia and North Carolina, but nothing like a general work. The storm of war was sweeping up to Virginia from the South. Phillips and Arnold were already in the heart of the State, scattering terror wherever they moved. The preachers found it dangerous to travel their circuits; many of the societies were entirely broken up, and others prevented from holding regular meetings. Large numbers of Methodists were drafted for service in the militia. Of these some fell in battle, others were corrupted by camp life, and made shipwreck of faith; few came back with their garments unspotted. Some of the Methodists declared themselves non-combatants on conscientious grounds. They would neither fight themselves nor hire substitutes. They were whipped, fined, imprisoned, but they firmly stood out against shedding blood. However we may condemn their principles, we must admire the firmness which

they displayed in refusing to do what they believed to be wrong.

The churches suffered heavy losses in the midst of these troubles. There was every thing to discourage Christians, and but little to animate them. The Virginia societies endured the heaviest trials. Many battles were fought in the State. The people were in a constant state of alarm. Religious worship was irregular; and when the societies did meet, the absorbing topic was the war. Scenes of the most painful character were often witnessed at the meetings. One would hear that his father had been killed; a father that his son had fallen, or was a prisoner in the hands of the enemy—a wife would wring her hands in anguish on learning that her husband was wounded and in the camp ready to die. Sore and great were these afflictions; the infant church was in the midst of the fire. Yet she stood firm, trusting in God, and praying for deliverance. When the storm swept away it was seen that the tree of Methodism, though torn and broken, had struck its roots deeper into the soil, and again budded and brought forth fruit.

In the spring Asbury made another preaching tour in Virginia. Leaving Baltimore soon after the Conference closed, he passed through Fairfax, Loudoun, Fauquier, and then struck across the mountains, going as far west as Hampshire, the outposts of Methodism in that direction. The house of William Adams' in Fairfax, was a favorite resting place. Asbury says he always came to it weary, but generally found refreshment for soul and body. Worthy representatives of this family are still to be found in that county.

He preached in the Court House at Leesburg, there being, probably, no Methodist church there at that time. Thence he rode to Rectortown, Fauquier, where he preached to "an apparently unconcerned people."

He found rest after battling with storms and floods for several days, at John Hite's, probably west of the Blue Ridge. At Martinsburg he preached, and returned to brother Bruce's, probably at or near Brucetown; he describes Bruce as a "lily among thorns." Thence he pushed on to the west, having heard good tidings of the work on the South Branch. He now reached a country of "mountains and natural curiosities." A long and weary ride brought him to a cabin late in the evening. Here he lay on a chest, with his clothes for covering, and "slept pretty well." He passed the celebrated Hanging Rock, and has given a description of it in his journal: "On my way to R. Williams' I had a view of a hanging rock that appears like a castle wall, about three hundred feet high, and looks as if it had been built with square slate stones; at first glance a traveller would be ready to fear it would fall on him." At Williams' house he had a congregation of three hundred, "but there were so many wicked whiskey drinkers, who brought with them so much of the power of the devil, that he had but little satisfaction in preaching." He crossed the South Branch and went into the settlements on Patterson's Creek. Here the people were mostly Dutch, who loved preaching, but did not understand class-meetings. He longed for a missionary to them. "Could we get a Dutch preacher or two to travel

with us, we should have a good work among the Dutch." These simple hearted people were "kind in their way," and he felt a deep concern for their spiritual welfare. He was now within ten miles of the Alleghanies, and into that wild region some of the preachers were about to penetrate, "seeking the outcasts of the people." Asbury found the spirit of persecution even in these quiet mountain vales. There was much talk of arresting some of the preachers; but he feared not, and with unflinching courage cheered on his little band of heroes against the strongholds of the enemy. This was no pleasure trip among the mountains. He wondered at his health and strength, considering the fatigue he endured. Riding in the rain, living on coarse, and often scanty fare, sleeping on chests, or on the cabin floors, with a blanket, or his own clothes for covering, preaching incessantly, and meeting the classes, climbing steep mountains, fording creeks and rivers, often at the hazard of his life; such were the comforts he found in this wild mountainous region. Amid all these labors and dangers he was not insensible to the sublime scenery around him; he had, indeed, a high appreciation of the grand and the beautiful, in the works of God. Crossing the Fork Mountain, and leading his horse when it was too steep to ride, he came to "a spring remarkable for its depth, and the quantity of water it discharges sufficient for a mill, two hundred yards from the source, which sometimes in freshets throws its mass of waters considerably above the ordinary level of the surface." He visited a cave which from the description must have been the celebrated Weyer's

Cave, in Augusta county. "I rode a mile and a half to see some of the greatest natural curiosities my eyes ever beheld; they were two caves, about two hundred yards from each other; their entrances were narrow and descending, gradually widening towards the interior, and opening into lofty chambers, supported to appearance, by basaltic pillars. In one of these I sung,

"Still out of the deepest abyss."

The sound was wonderful. There were stalactites resembling the pipes of an organ, which, when our old guide, Father Ellsworth, struck with a stick, emitted a melodious sound, with variations according to their size; walls, like our old churches; resemblances to the towers adjoining their belfries; and the natural gallery which we ascended with difficulty; all to me was new, solemn, and awfully grand. There were parts which he did not explore; so deep, so damp, and near night. I came away filled with wonder, with humble praise and adoration." The reader who has looked on these fantastic wonders, will not be surprised that Asbury should have been reminded of the grand old churches of his native land.

In his mountainous journey, Asbury found here and there a little band of faithful souls; but even on these fell the distresses of war. The only two men in the society at "Lost River," were drafted into the army. He prayed with them and gave them his blessing. The preaching had nothing like the effects he looked for among the rude people. Antinomiam preaching seemed to have hardened their hearts. But even these gloomy prospects did not banish hope from

his ardent mind. He had no doubt that a glorious gospel day would rise on this and every other part of America. Pushing on to the east, with a companion, in order to reach a quarterly meeting, they found themselves at night lost in the mountains. "Rocks, and woods, and dangers, on all sides surrounding them." To go on was impossible, so they tied their horses, wrapped themselves in their blankets, and lay down among the rocks. God gave them rest and the next day they reached the meeting. The resting places of Asbury had been little better than the bare ground during the whole time. "I have been obliged," he says, "to sleep on the floor every night since I slept in the mountains." He had been on "this roughest of circuits" nearly two months. He closed this journey at Leesburg, where he held a quarterly meeting, and gave a brief account of the Methodists, repelling certain charges which had been alleged against them in that place.

Having spent several months in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Delaware, Asbury again turned his face southward, and in January, 1782, reached Virginia. From Leesburg he passed across the county to Hanover, and thence down toward Gloucester. He found the spirit of party still lingering among the people. The local preachers discussed the question of ordinances, "and the people caught at them like fish at a bait." He thought they would yield when they learned that they must either give up their new plan, or be deprived of the travelling preachers. He believed the last struggle on this question would be made at the approaching Conference.

He preached in Gloucester at the "Old Church," "Stedham's," and other places. Mr. Stedham had been a man of the world, gay in his manners, and passionately fond of racing; he had been converted under the ministry of Jarratt, and was now an humble and devoted Christian. "The old man wept," says Asbury, "when I described the tenderness of a soul when first united to Christ." Crossing York River, Asbury passed through Williamsburg, where he found the churches converted into hospitals and barracks, and the houses pillaged and burnt, and rapidly made his way toward the strongholds of Methodism south of Petersburg.

At the places where he held forth the word of life two years before, he again appears full of zeal and faith. He rested a day with his old friend Jarratt, and found him "as usual quite friendly." At White Oak, Ellis' Chapel, Lane's Chapel, Mabry's and Woolsey's barn, he preached to large and eager congregations. He was again at the "great preaching house in Nansemond," and spoke "with uncommon openings in his mind." The great revival he had expected when here before had not been realized; "evil speaking and other things had prevented" the seed from springing up. He found during this time that the "party-men," the advocates of the ordinances, were growing weak, and he felt sure that the discussions had taught preachers and people a lesson, and that they would cleave more closely to doctrine and discipline. He received from his old friend, J. Mabry, an account of the triumphant death of his daughter. "When at the point of death, the Lord cut short his

work in her soul, cleansing her heart; she testified what God had done for her with great power; her language was surprising to all who were present; she appeared to be kept alive one whole day almost miraculously; her father said he thought *the power of God was so strong upon her, that she could not die.*" It was mid winter and excessively cold, yet Asbury did not relax his labors. Through almost every circuit in the southern part of the State, and a portion of North Carolina, he travelled, watching over the societies, and encouraging and directing the preachers. The care of the churches came upon him daily. This burden he could not bear alone: "I make it a rule," he says, "to spend an hour, morning and evening, in meditation, and in prayer for all the circuits, societies and preachers." His work was done in the midst of hardships that would have driven many a man from the field.

Speaking of his rides through the country lying on the Meherrin River, he says: "In this country I have to lodge half my nights in lofts, where light may be seen through a hundred places; and the cold wind at the same time blowing through as many." But he bore it all with thankfulness "expecting ere long to have better entertainment—a heavenly and eternal rest."

Asbury and his co-laborers were men mighty in the pulpit, because they were mighty in prayer. Their secret places were not in warm, cosy, carpeted rooms, but in the deep forests, with a carpet of green to kneel on in summer, and over head the umbrageous boughs vocal with the songs of birds; in the

winter, they knelt, wrapped in their cloaks, on the frozen ground, at the root of some giant tree with its bare limbs and crisp leaves over head, or in the barn among the grain and straw, or in the chilly lofts in the stillness of night. Wherever they prayed God was with them. "This morning," writes Asbury, "I poured out my soul to God in the granary, and was refreshed in my spirit." From their knees to the pulpit was the rule of the fathers of the Church. They were kept in a flame of love. When they called upon the Lord he answered them. "I always find the Lord present when I go to the throne of grace," says Asbury; "I am filled with love from day to day. O bless the Lord for the constant communion I enjoy with him!" Again, "I enjoy peace from morning to night; was it only for what I feel that I travelled and preached, my labours to myself would not be lost, but I shall do good. God will not suffer the *word* he gives me to fall to the ground; it will be blessed to preachers and people. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, forever and ever!" Animated by such a spirit, and sustained by such a faith, to fail was impossible.

On the 17th of April, 1782, Asbury met the Southern preachers in conference at Ellis' Meeting House, in Sussex county. Jarratt was present and opened the exercises with a profitable discourse on the fourteenth chapter of Hosea. This conference was a matter of convenience. The work had become so extensive that it was found impracticable for all the preachers to meet in one Conference at the North. The plan adopted was to hold a meeting in the South,

go through the regular routine of business, and then adjourn to meet in Conference at the North the ensuing month. The Southern Conference had full power to do all the business of a regular Conference, "except that of making or altering particular rules." "As the Conference in the North," says Jesse Lee, "was of the longest standing, and withal composed of the oldest preachers, it was allowed greater privileges than that in the South; especially in making rules and forming regulations for the societies. Accordingly, when anything was agreed to in the Virginia Conference, and afterwards disapproved of in the Baltimore Conference, it was dropped; but if any rule was fixed and determined on at the Baltimore Conference the preachers in the South were under the necessity of abiding by it." The Southern preachers of course had a right to sit and vote in the Northern Conference, and could there press the consideration of questions that might come up for final action.

As the printed minutes record the doings of the two Conferences for this year as one, we shall so consider them in our narrative.

The number in Society was 11,785. In Virginia, there were 3,368 members; the general increase was 1,246, and chiefly in Maryland; in Virginia and North Carolina there was a loss of nearly 400 members. The Societies had not recovered from the effects of the war.

One of the first questions before the Conference related to the administration of the ordinances. Asbury proposed that the preachers should sign a written agreement to adhere to the old plan. He strongly

urged it as a peace measure; most of the preachers signed it; a few sturdy recusants held out. Next morning they were subdued by a powerful sermon from Asbury, and every man but one put his name to the paper. They further agreed, in order to clear the vexed question entirely, to "put the people out of Society when they receive, and the preachers when they administer the ordinances, if they have been previously warned."

In view of the languishing state of the work, especially in the South, the Conference deeply considered the question:

"What can be done to revive the work?" The answer was: "Hold evening meetings and preach in the morning in convenient places." The success of morning meetings is a remarkable fact in the history of Wesleyan Methodism in England. There can be no doubt that Wesley was guided by a sound philosophy as well as by religious zeal in his rigid adherence to the plan of early preaching. Preachers and hearers were fresh and lively, and the truth fell upon the multitudes with a peculiar power. Convictions were deep and frequent, indeed, often overwhelming under the morning sermons of the early Methodist preachers; and those who had been sore wounded by the arrows of the Lord, during the day, often felt the healing balm applied while gathered with the Christians in the "evening meeting."

The fathers of American Methodism wisely resolved to follow the same plan.

A measure was adopted for equalizing the quarterage receipts of the preachers. All gifts, whether of

money or clothing, were to be valued by the preachers and stewards at quarterly meeting; the value of each gift was estimated as so much quarterage; and if a deficiency existed in any case after this valuation, it was to be made up to the preacher at Conference, from the profits on the sale of books, and from the yearly collections.

It seems that this singular method of adjusting quarterage accounts, was cheerfully acquiesced in by the preachers.

As a precautionary measure the Conference resolved to limit the authority of the preachers, by writing on every certificate: "The authority which this conveys is limited to the next Conference." This was done to protect the Societies against disorderly travelling preachers. They also adopted measures of protection against disorderly local preachers. To each certificate was appended: "This conveys authority no longer than you walk uprightly and submit to the direction of the assistant preacher." We find in the minutes the first action in reference to certificates of membership. "Let no person remove from north to south, without a certificate from the assistant preacher; and let no one be received into Society without."

The Conference unanimously chose Asbury to "act according to Wesley's original appointment, and preside over the American Conferences and the whole work."

Every assistant was directed so to arrange his circuit as that he or one of his helpers might travel with Asbury when he visited the circuit. A vote of thanks to Mr. Jarratt for his valuable aid to the Meth-

odist Societies was passed by the Conference. "The Conference acknowledge their obligations to the Rev. Mr. Jarratt for his kind and friendly services to the preachers and people from our first entrance into Virginia, and more particularly for attending our Conference in Sussex, in public and private; and advise the preachers in the south to consult him and take his advice, in the absence of Brother Asbury." This Conference lasted but three days, about the usual time, at that period, and closed with a love-feast. "The power of God was manifested in a most extraordinary manner, preachers and people wept, believed, loved and obeyed."

Twenty-two preachers were stationed in Virginia. No new circuits were reported. The name of Berkeley was changed to South Branch. This circuit covered the rugged and mountainous district that stretched from the Blue Ridge, along the waters of the Potomac and its southern tributaries, as far west as the Alleghanies. It was the frontier of Methodism in Western Virginia.

No sooner had the Conference closed than Asbury was again on the wing. The day after, he rode nearly fifty miles without eating or drinking. He was bound northward, and felt pain at parting with his Virginia brethren as if he had left something valuable behind him. His route lay through Dinwiddie, Amelia, Powhatan, Fluvanna, Amherst, Albemarle; he rode usually between forty and fifty miles a day without eating more than one meal, and frequently none at all. He rested a few days with his old friend, Henry Fry, in Culpepper, and then pushed on to a quar-

terly meeting in Fairfax. On his route he heard the "good news" that Britain had acknowledged the independence of America.

Having reached Baltimore, and finished the business of the Northern Conference, he again turned his face toward Virginia. Two days he preached at Leesburg with poor effect, and "to little purpose." He exclaims, "God be merciful to these people!" From Leesburg he struck off to the west. He passed the gap of the mountain near where he slept in the woods the summer before, and rode twenty miles up the North River.

He found the morals of the people but little improved since his former visit. When he reached a resting place he found the people "hanging about their stink-pots of mulled whiskey." He and his travelling companions had generally to sleep on the floor in the same room with the family. "This," says he, "with the nightly *disagreeables* of bugs to annoy us, shows the necessity of crying to the Lord for patience." But he became in some sort accustomed to these things, and in the midst of them enjoyed peace of mind. In this trip he crossed Mill Creek mountain, walking and leading his horse; he preached to three hundred people "who worshipped by the side of a stream for want of a house." Thence he pushed on, crossed Nobbly Mountain, "stopped at its foot, ate a little bread, drank fine water, prayed and then went forward to Cressap's." He was at the foot of the Alleghanies. Through these wild mountains were scattered some of the lost sheep. Asbury pressed after them in the wilderness. "We were

riding till near ten o'clock up the Alleghany; the road was dreary; the night was dark. I wanted rest and found it. We had nearly two hundred people to hear in this newly settled country." He came down the mountain next day through a drenching rain, weary to faintness with fatigue, and his horse so weak from want of food that he fell with him twice. He writes: "We have ridden sixty miles along incredibly bad roads, and our fare was not excellent. O, what pay could induce a man to go through wet and dry, and fatigue and suffering as we do! souls are our hire." Again after preaching on Sunday and riding forty miles up and down steep and rugged mountains, he writes: "I am sick and weary—ah! how few are there who would not choose strangling rather than life and the labors we undergo, and the hardships and privations we are compelled to submit to! Blessed be God, we have hope beyond the grave!"

Though the preachers labored with great zeal, the prospects were not encouraging. At the close of this tour, Asbury wrote: "I am at times greatly concerned, that there are no visible movings and instantaneous conversions among the people."

In December, he was again in Virginia. At the Old Church in King and Queen, he preached to a "wild and hardened people." He passed across the country preaching towards Williamsburg. Here he found that the seat of government had been removed to Richmond. "Thus," he writes, "the worldly glory is departed from it. As to Divine glory, it never had any." He preached in the Court House. The picture he draws of the ancient capital is a sad

one: "The town has suffered, and is suffering; the palace, the barracks, and some good dwelling-houses burnt. The capitol is no great building, and is going to ruin; the exterior of the College not splendid, and but few students; the Bedlam-house is desolate, but whether because none are insane or all are equally mad, it might perhaps be difficult to tell." He left the place and rode for the "great preaching house in Nansemond." Here they had a solemn time. He passed through Suffolk, and found himself in the track of the war demon; most of the houses were destroyed, or more or less injured. He passed through Gates, Hertford, Bertie, and Northampton counties, North Carolina. In January he was with Jarratt, and they had a lively time at meeting. He preached at "Woolsey's barn; cold day, cold house, cold people." The state of religion in the fields where Methodism had won so many victories, was discouraging. From Holmes', in Mecklenburg, he writes: "My soul mourns for the deadness of the people in our old circuit." After attending a quarterly meeting in Mecklenburg, and making a flying trip to North Carolina, he hastened across the country to Buckingham, to visit some who had left the Methodists on account of the ordinances. He found them a kind and tender people, and his spirit was refreshed among them. Passing through Fluvanna and Orange, making long rides and preaching almost every day, he returned to Petersburg, on his way to the Conference in Sussex.

On Wednesday, May the 7th, the Conference began at Ellis' Chapel; and after the usual business, adjourned to meet at Baltimore on the 27th

of the same month. The whole number of members reported was 13,740. In Virginia, 3,649. The increase was, 1,955; more than half of this was in the South; in Virginia nearly three hundred; in North Carolina more than six hundred. Fourteen preachers were received on trial. Three "desisted from travelling." Thirteen new circuits were added at this Conference, making the whole number thirty-nine. The additions in the South were, Holstein and Alleghany in Virginia, and Guilford, Caswell, Salisbury, Marsh, Bertie, and Pasquotank, in North Carolina. Norfolk reappears in the minutes. Eighty-three preachers supplied the entire work; of these, twenty-seven were stationed in Virginia, and sixteen in North Carolina. There was an increase of twenty-four preachers, and the whole field was well supplied with active laborers. A new plan was adopted at this Conference to provide for the wives of the preachers. Out of eighty-three preachers it appears there were only eleven married men; or if more, only this number called on the Conference for assistance. The question was asked: "How many preachers' wives are to be provided for?" "Eleven—sisters Forrest, Mair, Wyatt, Thomas, Everett, Kimble, Ellis, Watters, Hagerty, Pigman, Dickens." The sum of £206 was estimated as sufficient for the support of these holy and self-denying women. Only £20 were to be raised in Virginia, i. e., Alleghany, 4; Berkeley, 6; Fairfax, 10. This was a novelty among the Methodists, and met the disapprobation of the leading laymen in some circuits. "They thought it unreasonable," says Jesse Lee, "that they should raise money for a woman they never saw,

and whose husband had never preached among them." "But," adds the old historian, "the Methodist cause is but one in every place; and he who loves his neighbor as himself, will feel for every circuit, every preacher and every preacher's family."

Jesse Lee, in his history, gives Cumberland as another new circuit added this year in Virginia; but from the minutes it appears that Cumberland, Maryland was intended; the circuit may have embraced a strip of country on both sides of the Potomac; but societies were reported only from "Old Town and Cumberland."

The question of slavery came up again at this Conference. Three years had passed since the Conference of 1780, and slavery was still in the Church. The advice then given had been but partially regarded. Many local preachers were slaveholders, and though they were faithful, zealous, and useful men, this imaginary blot on their ministerial character must be removed. The Conference asked the following question: "What shall be done with our local preachers who hold slaves contrary to the laws which authorize their freedom in any of the United States?"

The answer was: "We will try them another year. In the meantime let every assistant deal faithfully and plainly with every one, and report to the next Conference. It may then be necessary to suspend them."

The Conference evidently still felt nervous on the subject. They were certainly desirous of freeing the ministry and the membership from slavery, and yet in their action they manifested a praiseworthy deference

to public sentiment on the perplexing question. The laity were still left under the advisory action of 1780; the local preachers are now dealt with, but very tenderly, and only in those States where emancipation was allowable. They were to be tried another year, (they had been on trial already three years,) they were to be labored with by the travelling preachers, and if found to be incorrigible at the ensuing Conference, it *might* be necessary to suspend them. We shall see how this repeated tampering with the question of slavery kept the societies in agitation, and seriously hindered the work of God.

This Conference took strong ground against making, selling and drinking spirituous liquors. "Shall our friends be permitted to make spirituous liquors, sell, or drink them in drams?" "By no means; we think it wrong in its nature and consequences; and desire all our preachers to teach the people by precept and example to put away this evil."

It is not to be supposed from this language that the Methodist preachers were even occasional dram drinkers. "It was but seldom known," says Jesse Lee, "that a Methodist preacher drank spirituous liquors, unless in cases of extreme necessity."

To provide against the reception of unworthy persons who might emigrate from England, the Conference decided to receive none without a letter of recommendation, the truth of which they had no reason to doubt. Wesley endorsed the prudence of this measure in a letter to the American Societies, in the course of the same year; in which he cautioned them against preachers coming from England or Ireland

without his recommendation. He thought the greatest danger to the work in America was "likely to arise either from preachers coming from Europe, or from such as might arise from among themselves, speaking perverse things, or bringing in among them new doctrines, particularly Calvinism." Within a few years after the date of this letter the fears of Wesley were realized in the unhappy schism of O'Kelly and his followers.

The Conference did not omit to appoint two days of thanksgiving for the peace established between England and the United States, for the temporal and spiritual welfare of the newborn nation, and for the glorious work of God.

The close of the war opened the way of the preachers into every part of the land. The borders of Zion began to enlarge, and the sound of the gospel was heard for the first time in many places. In the frontier settlements the work grew apace. During the war many families, through fear or necessity, had removed into the wild lands of the West; not a few of these had been Methodists in their old homes and now began to call earnestly for the preaching of the gospel from their former spiritual guides. The preachers gladly responded to the call, and were received with open arms. "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," was often heard as the unmistakable saddle-bags-hero was descried making his way toward the cabin of some far off settler among the mountains. Old members were hunted up, classes formed, preaching places appointed, revi-

vals began, and soon a circuit was formed from three to five hundred miles round.

To the honor of Methodism be it said, that it has always marched in the front rank of emigration from the east to the west. Scarcely has the hardy pioneer nailed the last slab on his rude hut, before the preacher has entered to bless it by his prayers and to consecrate it to the service of God as a Bethel in the wilderness.

The record of Asbury's travels in Virginia during this year is, with slight variations, but a repetition of his former labors and trials. A few weeks after the close of the Conference at Baltimore, we find him on the road to the beautiful valley of the Shenandoah. He seemed to have a passion for the hardest frontier work. He rode for several days together without a mouthful to eat except a small biscuit. "This," he writes, "is hard work for man and horse; but this, however, is not the worst, religion is greatly wanting in these parts. The inhabitants are much divided; made up, as they are, of different nations, and speaking different languages, they agree in scarcely anything, except it be to sin against God." On this tour he preached, probably for the first time, to a few people in the town of Winchester. After spending a month or more in the Valley, he returned to the North. The last of November he was again on the banks of the Potomac; it was near night and cold; his companion was unwilling to cross, and they were compelled to pass the night in the house of a drunken landlord, "without fire, candle, or supper." The next morning they crossed and came to Alexandria,

where he preached in the Court House. Asbury took his old route through Prince William, Stafford, Caroline, King William, King and Queen, Gloucester and James City. At Williamsburg he preached on the steps of the Court House; he believed that God would call out a people in that place. He passed through Portsmouth; and hurried on to the lower circuits in North Carolina; here he found the work reviving and scores of sinners returning to God. He was comforted, and took courage.

The remainder of the winter he spent in the border counties of Virginia and North Carolina. In the spring he travelled through Powhatan, Cumberland and Buckingham. Here he found poor encouragement for religion. His soul was stirred within him as he looked on the heedless crowds that attended preaching, and he cried out: "O my Lord, arise for thine own glory, visit this people in mercy, and make known thy power in the salvation of poor sinners." Crossing James River, he preached in Amherst, Albemarle and Madison, closing the tour with a quarterly meeting at Henry Fry's. The congregation was large; a living power attended the word; the love-feast was a season of great joy to the Christians, and all felt that the Lord was with them of a truth.

The twelfth Conference met at Ellis' Chapel on the 30th of April, 1784; and ended at Baltimore on the 28th of the next month. "It was considered as but one Conference," says Jesse Lee, "although they met first in Virginia, and then adjourned to Baltimore, where the business was finished." This Conference lasted but two days. Our business," says

Asbury, "was conducted with uncommon love and unity." Jarratt was present, preaching the word, and lending his wise counsel to the deliberations of the body. The returns showed the whole number of members to be 14,988. Of these 4,453 were in Virginia. The increase for the year was 1,248; of this only 81 was the gain in the Northern circuits, while in the Southern it was 1,167. Nearly the whole of this increase was in North Carolina; there was a decrease in the Virginia circuits of nearly 200.

Eleven preachers were admitted on trial; four located; two had died. Before this Conference no notice had been taken of those preachers who died in the work.

From about this time begin to appear in the Minutes those brief, but expressive obituaries, supposed to be from the pen of Asbury. Of the two that fell in the field this year it is simply stated in the Minutes that they died. Of one of them, Henry Metcalf, who was a man of great faith and devotion, it is said that when he found his end approaching, he rose from his bed, and died upon his knees in prayer.

Forty-six circuits were reported in the whole work; eighty-three preachers were stationed; twenty-three supplied the widening fields in Virginia, and twenty-one in North Carolina. Bedford, Amherst, Orange, Richmond, Hampton, and Accomac appear on the Minutes as new circuits in Virginia, and Wilmington was added in North Carolina.

The attention of the Conference was turned toward the erection of new chapels, and the liquidation of debts on those already built. The preachers were

directed to take up collections for this purpose in all the circuits, and to insist that every member who was not supported by charity, should give something. For the first time a question appears in reference to superfluity in dress.

"How shall we prevent superfluity in dress among our people?"

"Let the preachers carefully avoid every thing of this kind in themselves, and speak frequently and faithfully against it in all our societies."

The question of slavery was again brought up. "What shall we do with our friends that will buy and sell slaves?"

"If they buy with no other design than to hold them as slaves, and have been previously warned, they shall be expelled, and permitted to sell on no consideration."

"What shall we do with our local preachers who will not emancipate their slaves, in the States where the laws admit it?"

"Try those in Virginia another year, and suspend the preachers in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey." The rule of the previous year had accomplished but little, even in the northern portion of the work where the anti-slavery sentiment was supposed to be very decided.

The Conference could no longer brook such contumacy among the local preachers. The act of suspension was passed against all north of Virginia; here they were allowed another year to consider the matter, making four years of probation since the first slavery action in 1780; surely, the Virginia lo-

cal preachers must have been regarded as stupidly ignorant or incorrigibly perverse on this subject; and yet they were zealous and useful men, almost rivaling the travelling preachers in labors and sacrifices for the cause of God. Their great fault was mastership over a race, never so happy, contented and thrifty, as when under the control of the white man.

Notwithstanding all the previous efforts of the Conference to free the itinerancy from slavery, it still lingered there. "What shall be done with our travelling preachers that now are, or hereafter shall be, possessed of slaves, and refuse to manumit them where the law permits?" The reply was brief and emphatic. "Employ them no more." And yet it seems that in those States where the laws did not permit emancipation the travelling preachers might hold slaves, but almost the whole moral power of the Conference was turned against them; and this, perhaps more than any enactment, induced them to rid themselves of the supposed evil.

The pecuniary wants of the preachers, who were thoroughly worked, but poorly paid, induced the Conference to make an order for a public collection in all the principle places in the circuits to meet the wants of those who were reported deficient at the Annual Conference. This is the first recorded action in reference to the Conference collections, that we find in the Minutes. It had, however, been the practice to take up such collection; these, with the profits on the sale of books, served to give the deficient preachers a scanty supply of means.

Thirteen preachers' wives were to be provided for; the whole amount judged necessary to meet their wants was £302. Of this sum £72 pounds were assessed to circuits in Virginia, and £8, in North Carolina, i. e. Fairfax, 20; Brunswick, 10; Sussex, 10; Amelia, 10; Mecklenburg, 8; Nansemond, 7; Portsmouth, 7; Camden, 6; Bertie, 2. This money was to be collected and paid quarterly.

The allowance of the General Assistant was fixed at £24, "with his expenses for horses and travelling brought to and paid at Conference." There is no allusion to the allowance of the travelling preachers from 1778, when it was fixed at "Eight Pounds, Virginia Currency," to the Christmas Conference of 1784, at which the Church was organized, when it was raised to "Twenty-five pounds (Pennsylvania currency) and no more."

The Conference found it necessary to guard the societies against the intrusion of emigrant English preachers. "If they are recommended by Mr. Wesley, will be subject to the American Conference, preach the doctrine taught in the four volumes of Sermons, and Notes on the New Testament, keep the circuits they are appointed to, follow the directions of the London and American Minutes, and be subject to Francis Asbury, as General Assistant, while he stands approved by Mr. Wesley and the Conference, we will receive them; but if they walk contrary to the above directions, no ancient right or appointment shall prevent their being excluded from our connection.

The fathers of Methodism placed full value on the

"Songs of Zion." The lyrical element they knew to be one of great power in all religious movements, and fearing that in their Societies, in times of great excitement, it might degenerate into paltry ballads and jingling rhymes, they attempted at this Conference to reform Methodist singing. The directions they laid down are brief, but complete.

"Let all our preachers who have any knowledge in the notes, improve it by learning to sing *true* themselves, and keeping close to Mr. Wesley's tunes and hymns." The Scriptural Psalmody of Methodism has contributed vastly to its success. Indeed, it may be questioned whether it would have moved on with so great rapidity and power in England and America, had not the poetical genius of Charles been allied with the clear, serene intellect, the extensive and varied learning, the calm, but powerful eloquence, and the preëminent legislative ability of John Wesley. While one brother embraced every doctrine and duty and privilege of Christianity in his sermons and tracts scattered over the land, the other enshrined them in strains of poetic grandeur that swept the whole field of Christian experience like an inspiration from heaven.

Of the great poet of Methodism it has been well said: "Every important doctrine of Holy Scripture, every degree of spiritual experience, almost every shade of religious thought and feeling, and nearly every ordinary relation and incident of human life, are treated in his abundant and ever varying verse. No poet surpasses him in the variety of his themes. Rarely can any man open his volumes without find-

ing something apposite to his own moods or wants. The whole soul of Charles Wesley was imbued with poetic genius. His thoughts seem to bask and revel in rhythm. The variety of his meters (said to be unequalled by any English writer, whatever) shows how impulsive were his poetical emotions, and how wonderful his facility in their spontaneous and varied utterance. In the Wesleyan Hymn Book alone they amount to at least twenty-six, and others are found in his other productions. They march at times like lengthened processions with solemn grandeur, they sweep at other times like chariots of fire through the heavens, they are broken like the sobs of grief at the grave-side, play like the joyful affections of childhood at the hearth, or shout like victors in the fray of the battle-field." Such were the songs that resounded in the march of Methodism through the Old and through the New World. There were stirring peals that nerved the hosts of Israel for the battle; there were plaintive strains that took the form of prayer when the slain of the Lord lay around, there were exulting shouts of joy and victory that broke forth as the dead rose to life; there were sweet and soothing melodies for the bedside of sickness, there were triumphant hymns that wafted the soul of the departing saint across the dark river to the company of angels, and the just made perfect.

Next to their Bibles, the early preachers studied their Hymn Books, and many a shaft of truth was pointed with some apt quotation from the noble effusions of Charles Wesley. Their long and lonely rides were enlivened by his rich and varied airs; and whether

they rested in the cabins of poverty or the mansions of wealth, some appropriate hymn, sung in hearty strains, formed a part of family worship. It is to be lamented that the voice of song is now so seldom heard in social worship. Except with a few older preachers, the hymn of praise is entirely omitted.

This Conference recalled the attention of the Societies to the much neglected duty of fasting. On every class-paper was to be written, "Observe the first Friday after every quarterly meeting as a day of fasting." It was afterwards changed to the Friday before each quarterly meeting. With scrupulous care this used to be written on every class-book when transcribed by the preacher.

Such were the most important actions of this Conference. The year that followed was marked by success chiefly in the frontier portions of the work. The pioneer preacher pressed after the pioneer settler, and religion spread rapidly along the borders of the savage wilderness.

"The call of the people was great for more laborers to be sent into the harvest."

Asbury, the great leader, heard the call, and planned an expedition into the pathless wilds of the West. He had never before gone in that direction beyond the limits of South Branch circuit, he now determined to visit the rugged but romantic country bordering on Cheat River. Resting for a few days at "Sister Boydstone's, one of the kindest women in Virginia," where "all things were comfortable," and where he "was refreshed in soul and body," he left

Shepherdstown for the Cheat River Region. Two weeks travel brought him to the frontier. He writes: "We passed the Little Meadows, keeping the route of Braddock's road for about twenty-two miles along a rough pathway; arriving at a small house, and halting for the night, we had *literally* to lie as *thick as three in a bed*. My soul has peace. For three days I have had a fever; the excessive labor I have undergone may have nourished it. When I rose yesterday morning I was very unwell. After riding about seven miles, I was taken with a trembling and perspiration. I ate something and felt better, and my fever is now abated. My soul has been blessed in an uncommon degree; and thou, my soul, bless the Lord; and O, that he may be pleased to make me a blessing to the people in this part of the world!" He preached to the hardy settlers in those wild regions and felt sure that God would gather a people among them. He crossed into Pennsylvania, preaching almost every day in cabins or under the trees, wherever the people gathered to hear him.

In the fall of the year, Asbury visited a part of Virginia he had never seen before, where Methodism was just taking root, and where it has since brought forth abundant fruit. We refer to the lower portion of the Northern Neck. The following extract from his journal gives his view of the people and the country: "The Presbyterians came down here about thirty years ago; many were moved and some advances made towards a reformation. A house was built for public worship. About six years past, the Baptists visited these parts, and there was some stir

among the people. I think the Methodists are most likely to have permanent success, because the inhabitants are generally Episcopalians. We preached sometime before any regular circuit was formed, or any people had joined us; now brother Willis is stationed here, and there are one hundred in Society. The land here is low and level, and is refreshed with the breezes from the sea; there is an abundance in the productions of the earth and of the waters; the people are generous, social, and polished in their manners." Those who are acquainted with that portion of our State will recognize the truthfulness of this picture.

Re-crossing the Bay, Asbury soon after met with Dr. Coke and Richard Whatcoat, at Barratt's chapel in Delaware. Having had no conversation with them before service, he was surprised to see Whatcoat assist in the administration of the sacrament. He writes: "I was shocked when first informed of the intention of these, my brethren, in coming to this country; it may be of God. My answer then was, if the preachers unanimously choose me, I shall not act in the capacity I have hitherto done by Mr. Wesley's appointment. The design of organizing the Methodists into an Independent Episcopal Church, was opened to the preachers present, and it was agreed to call a general Conference, to meet at Baltimore the ensuing Christmas; as also that brother Garrettson go off to Virginia to give notice thereof to our brethren in the South."

While the Christmas Conference is engaged in the work of framing an "Independent Episcopal Church," let us turn to some of those heroes of Methodism, that wrought wonders in their day.

CHAPTER VI.

American Methodist preachers—John Easter—His parentage—His entrance upon the regular work—Extraordinary success—Thrilling scenes under his preaching—Failure of health—His death—Philip Bruce—His early life—Incidents during the Revolutionary war—Personal appearance and character as a preacher—Interesting incident—Jesse Lee—His conversion—Call to preach—In the Army—Refuses to bear arms—Labors among the soldiers—Attends a Conference—Impressions—Becomes an Itinerant—Laborers in the South—Sent to New England—Trials and triumphs—Anecdotes—Personal appearance—View of his character.

A GRAPHIC description of American Methodist preachers, as a class, by the latest and most accomplished historian of Methodism, will serve as an introduction to the sketches we propose to give in this chapter. "The usual process of a long preparatory training for the ministry could not consist with the rapidly increasing wants of the country. Methodism called into existence a ministry less trained, but not less efficient; possessing in a surprising degree that sterling good sense and manly energy, examples of which great exigencies always produce among the common people. These it imbued with its own energetic spirit, and formed them to a standard of character altogether unique in the annals of the modern Christian ministry. They composed a class which, perhaps, will never be seen again. They were dis-

tinguished by native mental vigor, shrewdness, extraordinary knowledge of human nature, many of them by overwhelming natural eloquence, the effects of which on popular assemblies are scarcely paralleled in the history of ancient or modern oratory, and not a few by powers of satire and wit, which made the gainsayer cower before them. To these intellectual attributes they added great excellencies of the heart, a zeal which only burned more fervently where that of ordinary men would have grown faint, a courage that exulted in perils, a generosity which knew no bounds, and left most of them in want in their latter days, a forbearance and co-operation with each other which are seldom found in large bodies, an entire devotion to one work, and, withal, a simplicity of character which extended even to their manners and their apparel. They were likewise characterized by rare physical abilities. They were mostly robust. The feats of labor and endurance which they performed in incessantly preaching in villages and cities, among slave huts and Indian wigwams; in journeyings, seldom interrupted by stress of weather; in fording creeks, swimming rivers, sleeping in forests; these, with the novel circumstances with which such a career frequently brought them in contact, offered examples of life and character which, in the hands of genius might be the materials of a new department of romantic literature. They were men who labored as if the judgment fires were about to break out in the world, and time to end with their day. They were precisely the men whom the moral wants of the New World at the time demanded. The usual

plan of local labor, limited to a single congregation or to a parish, was inadequate to the wants of Great Britain at this time, but much more so to those of the New World. The extraordinary scheme of an itinerant ministry met, in the only manner possible, the circumstances of the latter; and the men described were the only characters who could have sustained that scheme amid the hardships of American life."

Near the close of the Revolution three men appeared in the ranks of Methodism whose labors and success as preachers of the gospel have rarely been surpassed in any age of the Church. These men were John Easter, Philip Bruce, and Jesse Lee; each of whom merits a separate volume in which to record his labors, his sufferings, and his victories in the cause of Christ. Only the last named has received a tribute worthy of his noble deeds from the able pen of an accomplished kinsman, and a worthy successor in the ministerial office.

John Easter was born, it is supposed, in Mecklenburg county. His parents were among the earliest fruits of Methodism in that section of the State, and from them "Easter's Meeting House," one of the oldest preaching places in Mecklenburg circuit, took its name. Their house was the home of the early preachers, and two of their sons, John and Thomas, entered the itinerancy. The sons may have caught their flaming zeal from the example of their father, for he was a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. "When I preached at Easter's in 1799," says Rev. James Patterson, himself a gospel pioneer, "the good old man got his soul so full of the love

of God that it overflowed, and he praised God and shouted until his frail body could scarcely contain his enraptured spirit. His lamp was not only burning, but was in a full blaze, his wings plumed, and nothing prevented him from soaring to the realms above, but the casket of dust which contained the immortal spirit." Trained by such a father, John Easter went forth with the dew of youth on his brow to toil for souls. Never did a man work with greater zeal and with greater success. Ten years he went forth day and night, in all seasons, and in all places, calling sinners to repentance, and then with failing health and shattered constitution, he was compelled to leave the field in which he longed to live and die. Beyond all doubt, John Easter was the most powerful hortatory preacher of his day. His word was like a sharp sword piercing through flesh, and bones, and marrow. His faith was transcendant, his appeals irresistible, his prayers like talking with God face to face. He lived and moved in a flame of love. A heavenly fervor dwelt in his heart, breathed in his words, and beamed in his eyes. Plain, unlettered, simple in style, almost rude in speech, he yet spoke with an authority and power before which pride fell humbled, and wicked gainsayers cowered in the dust. He never failed to reach the deepest and strongest emotions of the soul, when addressing the people, and it was no unusual thing for scores and hundreds to fall down in the pangs of sudden and powerful conviction.

The fragmentary traditions that have come down to us of the effects of his preaching and his faith

almost exceed the bounds of belief. And yet they rest on the testimony of eye-witnesses, and must be received as true. Perhaps no man has ever been more signally honored of God as an instrument in the conversion of souls. On one of his circuits eighteen hundred members were added to the Church in a single year. Thousands were brought to God under his ministry, and among them were some of the brightest lights of Methodism, both in the laity and in the ministry.

William McKendree and Enoch George, two of the best and purest men that ever graced the annals of the Christian Church, were the spiritual children of John Easter. Had he done nothing more than give two such men to the Church of God, this would have been sufficient to embalm his memory in the hearts of all true Christians throughout all time.

Many thrilling scenes under his preaching yet linger among the people in those counties where he principally labored. A most extraordinary display of his faith was witnessed in Brunswick. At Merritt's Meeting House a quarterly meeting was in progress, and so vast was the concourse of people from many miles round, that the services were conducted in a beautiful grove near the church. In the midst of the exercises a heavy cloud arose, and swept rapidly on towards the place of worship. From the skirts of the grove the rain could be seen coming on across the fields. The people were in consternation; no house could hold a third of the multitude, and they were about to scatter in all directions. Easter rose in the pulpit in the midst of the confusion. "Breth-

ren," cried he at the top of his voice, "be still, while I call upon God to stay the clouds, till his word can be preached to perishing sinners." Arrested by his voice and manner, they stood between hope and fear. He kneeled down and offered a fervent prayer, that God would then stay the rain that his work might go on, and afterward send refreshing showers. While he prayed, the angry cloud, as it swiftly rolled up towards them, was seen to part asunder in the midst, pass on either side of the ground and to close again beyond, leaving a space several hundred yards in circumference perfectly dry. The next morning a copious rain fell again, and the fields that had been left dry were well watered. It is needless to say that this visible answer to prayer filled the minds of the people with awe, and gave a great impulse to the work of God.

He was a man who prayed, nothing doubting, and he infused his own spirit into the hearts of those to whom he preached. With him, to ask was to receive. To him God was always at hand; "Ask and ye shall receive," was the promise he plead always at the mercy seat; and he never plead in vain.

He was present at a meeting with several other preachers. There was powerful and pointed preaching, but no visible effect; at the close of an earnest sermon Easter rose to conclude the services. He coolly directed his exhortation to the Christians present, and urged them to pray, with the assurance that he knew souls would be converted before the meeting closed. God endorsed the word of his servant; and before

they left the house several persons were powerfully converted.

At another meeting, says one of his contemporaries, he rose after a fine, but apparently ineffectual sermon from James O'Kelly, and opened an exhortation with the positive declaration that seven persons would be converted before the meeting ended. "The pious part of the congregation were much alarmed, and thought his assertion bold and presumptuous. But he began to exhort, and the spirit of Elijah's God came upon him, and the people felt as if he had smitten them with the prophet's mantle; great power fell on the congregation, and before the meeting closed more than seven souls were powerfully converted."

The following marvellous account is fully authenticated. He was holding a meeting in the forest; it was in the mid-day of his fame and power; hundreds upon hundreds had gathered to hear the wonderful man. In the midst of his sermon, while all were hanging on his lips in breathless silence, suddenly a rushing sound as of a mighty wind smote the ears of the hearers. All eyes were instantly turned upward, but no storm had smitten the forest, not a twig, not a leaf stirred; still the awful sound swept over and around them. Instantly, several hundred horses broke from their fastenings and rushed wildly in all directions through the woods. Hundreds of men and women fell flat on the ground struck down by the mighty power of God. The cry of conviction that arose was appalling; even the holiest Christians trembled in the presence of that mysterious sound. The work of conversion was as instantaneous as the

work of conviction, and many were the witnesses for Christ that arose in the midst of the awe struck multitude. The effects of this display of Divine power were great indeed on the minds of the people far and near. The work spread like fire in dry stubble and hundreds were added to the church. The battle began in this woods meeting, and God seemed to say to the leader of the host of Israel as he had said to David: "When thou shalt hear a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees, then thou shalt go out to battle; for God is gone forth before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines."

The excessive labors of Easter soon wore down his constitution, and he fell back into the local ranks. But here he burned with the same holy fire, and toiled with the same unabated zeal. We have a letter from him to Rev. Stith Mead, which gives a true picture of the man. It was written in 1799, seven years after he located:

"VERY DEAR BROTHER.—I received your favor, and wish to be thankful that either God or man remembers me in love and mercy. For I am so useless that I am ready to wonder how it is that I am not laid aside as a broken vessel—for broken indeed I am—a half martyr. First for souls, and second for bread; at best a poor, unworthy, unprofitable servant. But I can yet rejoice that the Lord blesses your labors to the good of souls—may he bless you more and more in your return to Brunswick; though we have been blessed in the labors and piety of our good brother, William Early. I greatly desire to be

with you all at Conference, but the many afflictions of my family, and other occurrences render it almost impracticable. But you will have my poor prayers for the Great God to be present and powerful among you. My love to all that are willing to die for *Christ* and the *truth*.

"Yours in the best of bonds,

"JOHN EASTER."

It is sad to behold such a spirit struggling in fetters, a half martyr for souls, and for bread, longing to be at the Conference, and to go forth reaping in the great field of the world. This holy man fell a willing sacrifice to his zeal for Christ. Over exertion at a protracted meeting brought on a disease of the lungs, which quickly closed his mortal career. He died, it is supposed, within two years after the date of this letter, a full martyr for the faith. So far as we know, not even a stone marks the grave of this champion of the cross. But his record is on high, and thousands shall rise in the last day, and call him blessed. All around him shall spring up the seals of his ministry, for he sleeps in the field on which he won so many victories.

He left a son who became a very useful local preacher, but finally left the church of his father, and took orders in the Protestant Episcopal Church. He was the pastor of a congregation near Baltimore. for some time, and died in that city not many years ago. He left an only son, who was suddenly killed, and thus the line of that branch of the family become extinct.

No man in his day was held in higher esteem by his brethren and co-laborers than John Easter. He was loved and reverenced by hundreds as their father in the gospel. "I have heard Bishop McKendree," says the venerable Father Boehm, "speak of him in the highest terms, and with filial affection, as a son reverences his father, as a man, and as a successful minister. I travelled over the ground where Mr. Easter formerly preached, and his name and works were still remembered. I conversed with a number who knew him personally and intimately, and they spoke of him with profound respect and veneration."

"The facts which have come down to our times," says Dr. Lee, "of the almost miraculous labors of the Rev. John Easter, his strong faith, and his astonishing success, are far more surprising than any of those recorded in the days of the Son of Man. But we may not detail them. Yet respecting the *character* of the work, it ought to be said that *convictions* for sin were sudden and strong. The whole moral nature was wrought upon by deep and powerful emotions, that found expression in confession of sin and cries for mercy. And *conversions* were no less sudden and powerful. Supplications for pardon were quickly succeeded by songs of rejoicing and shouts of triumph.

Many who came to the house of God careless and scoffing, returned clothed and in their right minds, with new joy in their hearts, and a new pathway for their feet. The change was wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost, and its genuineness received a thousand attestations, in the altered lives, persevering

fidelity, and increasing holiness of those who, in that gracious effusion of the Spirit, were brought from darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

The name of Philip Bruce will ever hold a bright place in the annals of Methodism. He was born in North Carolina, near King's Mountain, December 25, 1755. His grandfather was a French Protestant, and fled to this country with the persecuted Huguenots. The family name was originally De Bruise, but was corrupted into Bruce by a Scotch teacher from whom Philip received his education. He was the first of his family that became a Methodist. When he was quite a youth, the pioneer preachers reached the wild region of his home, and a powerful revival broke out under their preaching. Many were brought to God and among them was Philip Bruce. Then was kindled a flame that burned with increasing brightness for more than fifty years. His parents were the first fruits of his labors. One evening while sitting around the fire he began to speak to them on the subject of religion. While the boy talked his father began to tremble and weep; his mother too, was deeply affected. Philip asked his father to pray with them. "No," said the old man, in a trembling voice, "I cannot pray." He then turned to his mother who was by his side, bathed in tears, and asked her to pray, she said she could not, and urged him to do so. He knelt down and earnestly presented his aged and weeping parents at the Throne of Grace. The great deep of their hearts was broken up under the fervent appeals of their son; they became

true seekers of salvation, soon found peace in believing, and united with the Methodist Society. Philip was soon after licensed as an exhorter. Those days were the darkest of our revolutionary period, and toryism was rife in that part of the land. The Bruces were zealous Republicans, and none of them more so than young Philip. He had many narrow escapes from the halter and the bullet. One day as he was hunting wild turkeys in the woods a party of tories rushed upon him and made him prisoner; they were about to hang him to the nearest tree, when, on examining his pockets, they found his license as an exhorter. The captain immediately said it would never do to hang a priest, and ordered him to be released, with a warning never again to be caught shooting wild turkeys. Unwittingly they had set at liberty one of the best friends of the American cause, for Bruce had opportunities for collecting information respecting the designs and movements of the British, possessed by few in his neighborhood, and he never failed to make his knowledge serviceable to the cause of freedom.

He was present at the battle of King's Mountain, but as he was looked upon as a sort of a chaplain, the officers would not allow him to go into the engagement, and he was left with the sick and baggage. While engaged in his duties as a circuit preacher, he was taken prisoner, sometimes by the British and sometimes by the Americans, but never maltreated by either.

On one occasion he was induced to preach to a band of tories whose captain had gone to procure arms. He did so, and actually persuaded them to

disperse. When the captain returned with the arms he found no men, and on being told through whose influence his men had dispersed, he swore vengeance against Bruce. Not very long afterward, when he had preached at the house of a friend, up rode the captain with two of his men. Springing from his horse, he rushed to the porch where Bruce was quietly reading, and with horrid oaths presented his gun at his breast. Bruce caught the muzzle and a scuffle ensued. The captain, dropping his gun, drew his sword and made a tremendous cut at his head, but in its sweep the weapon struck the rafter of the porch. Just at this moment up rode three whigs; the two tories gave the alarm, and Bruce finding the captain willing to be off, pushed him down the steps, sprang into the house and shut the door. The three tories rode off in quick time one way, and the whigs as fast in another. As the captain passed the window, Bruce shouted, "Good-bye, Captain." In reply he swore he would kill him. A day or two after, Bruce reached his next appointment, and although his horse had been put up, and the people had assembled for preaching, it was so solemnly impressed on his mind that it was his duty to leave the place immediately, that, notwithstanding the earnest remonstrance of the landlord, he called for his horse and rode off, leaving an appointment for another time. Among those who had come to the meeting was a preacher of another denomination. Bruce was not more than out of sight when the captain's lieutenant rode up with a file of men, and enquired for the preacher. The one who had come

to hear Bruce preach was pointed out to them as the only preacher present; they instantly shot him down, and rode off, bragging that Bruce would never disperse another tory company.

We give another incident. While travelling in the South, he had an appointment to preach which required him to start very early in order to reach it in time. After a ride of several miles he stopped at the house of a widow lady to get breakfast. He was scarcely seated in the house when an officer and a squad of men from Tarleton's troop rode into the yard and called for breakfast. Bruce met them, and politely invited them in, saying that he had called for the same purpose. He then left them and went to assist the good lady in the preparations. Very soon the table was spread with an abundance of good cheer, to which Bruce and the soldiers did ample justice. The breakfast ended, Bruce turned to the officer and said, "Sir, I am your prisoner. I am a Methodist preacher, on my way to an appointment, and would be pleased to be permitted to go."

"Certainly, certainly, Mr. Bruce," replied the officer, "you are at liberty to go."

He politely thanked the officer for his kindness, and rode off rejoicing. On being asked how he managed to get on so well with them, he said, "My father used to say to me, 'Phil, if they will only let you talk, they will never hang you.'"

In person Philip Bruce was commanding. He was tall, perfectly straight, very grave and dignified in his manners; his hair was black and worn long, his visage thin, his complexion dark, and his eyes bright

and piercing; his countenance was open and expressive, his features well developed and indicative of a high degree of intellectual power. In the pulpit he was graceful and impressive. His sermons were usually short, but powerful, and he excelled in the application of gospel truth. His appeals were often irresistible. A characteristic anecdote was related to the writer by Rev. Joseph Carson, who was present on the occasion referred to. In one of his Episcopal tours, Bishop Asbury passed through the town of Winchester, and as usual the good old man had sent ahead of him an appointment for preaching. In the afternoon the Bishop remarked to Bruce in a playful manner: "Now, Philip, I intend to pile up the brush to-night and you must set it on fire." Asbury preached a plain, pointed, practical sermon, and when he sat down Bruce arose and delivered a most powerful exhortation, which told with overwhelming effect on the congregation. The Bishop's brush-heap blazed at the touch of Philip's torch.

The following interesting notice of this good and great man has been furnished by Rev. Benjamin Devany:

"My first acquaintance with this remarkable man of God, one of the fathers of the Virginia Conference, took place in New Berne, North Carolina, February 1807, at which time and place the Virginia Conference held its annual session. He was the oldest preacher then belonging to the Conference, having travelled twenty-six years. His general appearance indicated that he was of French origin. In his person he was tall and spare, face thin, black eyes, dark skin,

and a prominent nose, with a pleasing, open countenance. He possessed great ministerial gravity, and yet he seemed ever cheerful without levity. He seldom spoke in the Conference, or in the social circle, without a smile lighting up his face. It was the practice of the preachers of that day to fast at least one day in every week, and at this Conference, the subject of fasting was brought up, but in what way it was introduced I do not now recollect; but I well remember the substance of what brother Bruce said concerning himself—that it had been his practice to fast one day in every week, but he had thought it injured his health, and that he did not now fast as often as he formerly did; he then said with tears in his eyes, 'perhaps it would have been better for me to have continued regardless of my health.' As a Presiding Elder he was kind and affectionate to the preachers under his charge, and treated them as brethren beloved. He was a great favorite among the preachers and the people. He possessed a philosophic mind, and it was well stored with useful knowledge. I think his mind was better cultivated than any of his compeers of the Conference. He united fine conversational powers with polished manners, and passed well in any company in which he chanced to be thrown. He stood high in every community, both as a preacher and a Presiding Elder. His sermons were generally short, and delivered with much zeal and energy."

The esteem in which he was held, was not confined to his own Conference; it is stated on good authority that twice at a General Conference, he came within three votes of being elected Bishop. Like most of

the early preachers he never married. It is said, however, that at one time he entertained very serious thoughts on the subject, and had actually selected the lady, if he had not broached the subject, but on consulting Bishop Asbury, that good man persuaded him to remain as he was. The opposition of Asbury to his preachers' marrying may be accounted for by the fact that few consented after marriage to subject their families to the privations and hardships of the itinerancy. He thus lost many of his best and strongest men from the itinerant ranks. A tradition has floated down to us to the effect that on a certain occasion, when he heard that one of his favorites in the "thundering legion," was a captive fast bound in love's golden fetters, he exclaimed: "I believe the devil and the women will get all my preachers."

Bruce was a noble leader in that glorious band of heroes who believed in, preached, and enjoyed, holiness of heart. He stood ever ready to obey the call: "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord." How eagerly did the men of that day long for the appearance of the messenger of release.

The following touching scene occurred while Bruce was yet in Virginia. His faithful and long tried friend, Rev. John Early, now bishop, hearing that he was extremely ill, rode a long distance to attend him as a nurse. He lodged in the same room with him, and one morning very early, perceiving the old man to be awake, he inquired how he had spent the night. "Oh!" said he, "I had a glorious dream last night. I thought I was in a straight road, and rapidly pressing along to some point in the distance that I seemed

eager to reach. Many persons fell into the same way as we moved on, till the company swelled to a great multitude. After a while we reached a large and beautiful gate, which was opened to us by the porters, and the happy throng entered amidst triumphant rejoicing. I then thought this is heaven; and immediately I felt that I was losing my old hat, and my old black coat, and my old boots; in their stead, I wore a crown of gold, and was wrapped in a pure white robe, and found on my feet beautiful and richly wrought sandals. But just then I awoke, and, alas! here I am still suffering in the flesh," and a shade of melancholy passed over the fine face of the old man as he lay on the couch of pain. The glorious vision had dissolved, and he was still buffeting the waves on a sea of troubles.

For thirty-six years he stood in the front rank of the itinerancy. Faithful in every position, and successful in every field, he might well adopt the motto, "In labors more abundant." He lived in the days that tried the souls of men, and from every trial he came forth like gold well refined. He was a father in the Virginia Conference, to whose words of love and wisdom every ear was attentive. Many of the preachers had grown up under his fostering hand, and to him they looked more than to any other man for wisdom and counsel, and for examples of noble self-denial, in the great field of ministerial toil. Borne down at length by labors and by the weight of years, he reluctantly consented to be placed in a superanuated relation, and in 1817 his name disappeared from the

effective list. The closing years of his life were spent among his kindred in Tennessee.

Calmly and peacefully he descended the vale of life, venerated and loved by all the Church, a veteran soldier of the cross, patiently awaiting his discharge from the militant Church on earth, and his call to join the triumphant host beyond the flood of death. His sublime death-scene we shall reserve for its appropriate place in this narrative.

In the history of early Methodism, the name of Jesse Lee holds a place second only to that of Francis Asbury. The life and labors of this eminent man have already been fully portrayed in the elaborate memoir prepared by Leroy M. Lee, D. D.; but still our work would be imperfect without, at least, a rapid sketch of one whose name is so closely interwoven with the rise and progress of Methodism in Virginia.

Jesse Lee was the son of Nathaniel and Elizabeth Lee, of Prince George county, Virginia. He was born March 12, 1758. At an early age he was put to school, and as soon as he had learned to read, was directed to procure a prayer-book, and carry it to to church with him every Sunday. Out of the prayer-book he learned the catechism. His teacher was a member of the Church of England, and possessed the form if not the power of godliness. He read the church service in his school at least twice a week, and thus sought to impress on the minds of his pupils many important truths of religion. These exercises, formal as they were, had their influence on the mind of young Lee. "When summoned to church on Sunday, he would seat himself in his pew,

with his prayer-book in his hand, and repeat the service in a manner which did credit to one of his age." His early catechetical instruction had a good effect in checking the sinful tendencies of a young and ardent nature. "In a thousand instances," he writes, "when I felt an inclination to act and speak amiss, I have been stopped by the recollection of my catechism, some parts of which I did not understand; yet it was good upon the whole that I learned it." It was but natural that in a community where the merest forms of religion were recognized, he should have yielded to the seductive influences of sin in some of its forms. It is said that he was fond of dancing and other frivolous amusements. But he was free from all the grosser vices of the day. In a review of his youth, taken in mature life, he says: "I do not recollect that I ever swore in my life, except one night, being in company with some wicked young people, I uttered some kind of oaths, for which I felt ashamed and sorry all the next day, and when all alone, I felt that God was displeased with me for my bad conduct. I believe I never did anything in my youth that the people generally call wicked. I used, however, to indulge bad tempers, and use some vain words."

Jesse Lee was converted in the spring of 1773. The word that fastened conviction on his heart fell from the lips of his father, who, with his mother, had found the way of life under the preaching of Devereux Jarratt. While in conversation with a pious relative, the elder Lee remarked: "If a man's sins *were* forgiven him he would *know* it." "These words," says Jesse, "took hold of my mind, I pondered them

in my heart, they kept running across my mind by day and by night." The question he asked himself was, "Are *my* sins forgiven?" "*No*," was the only reply of conscience. He wandered across the fields, and through the woods in an agony of spirit. He would cast himself down for prayer in the depths of the forest, and in a moment, fancying he was watched, he would start up and fly to a deeper and more secret recess. "I would frequently get by myself," he writes, "and with many tears pray to God to have mercy upon my poor soul, and forgive my sins. Sometimes in the open fields I would fall on my knees, and pray and weep till my heart was ready to break. At other times my heart was so hard that I could not shed a tear. It would occur to my mind, 'Your day of grace is past, and God will never forgive your sins.' It appeared to me that of all sinners in the world, I was the greatest; my sins appeared to me greater in magnitude and multitude than the sins of any other person." Thus he struggled on in thick darkness. For weeks the cry of his troubled spirit was, "How shall I escape the misery of hell? At length, having staggered under his heavy burden through the wilderness, he reached the borders of the promised land. "One morning being in deep distress, and fearing every moment I should drop in to hell, and viewing myself as hanging over the pit, I was constrained to cry in earnest for mercy, and the Lord came to my relief and delivered my soul from the burden and guilt of sin. My whole frame was in a tremor from head to foot, and my soul enjoyed sweet peace. The pleasure I then felt was indescribable.

This happiness lasted about three days, during which time I never spoke to any person about my feelings. I anxiously wished for some one to talk to me on the subject, but no one did."

Of this hesitation the enemy took advantage, the young believer fell into doubts, and for six months he was the victim of harrassing fears. One day a religious neighbor, riding with him, asked him if he had ever been converted? This led to an interchange of views, and, much encouraged by the conversation, young Lee again sought and found the evidence of pardon. His father's family having united with the Methodist Societies formed by Robert Williams, he was thrown much in the company of that good and earnest man. Under a sermon preached in his father's house, probably by Williams, Jesse was led to see the necessity of inward holiness. This great blessing he earnestly sought, and found to the great joy of his heart. Let him tell his own experience on this important point:

"I did firmly believe that the Lord was both able and willing to save to the uttermost all that would come to him. I felt a *sweet distress* in my soul for holiness of heart and life. I sensibly felt that while I was seeking for purity of heart, I grew in grace, and in the knowledge of God. This concern lasted for some time, till at length I could say, 'I have nothing but the love of Christ in my heart.' I was assured that my soul was continually happy in God. The world with all its charms *is crucified to me, and I am crucified to the world.*"

Having removed to North Carolina to superintend

the affairs of a widowed relative, his zeal began to manifest itself in earnest labor for the promotion of religion. He was appointed class-leader; he hesitated, but dared not refuse. His next step was to hold prayer meetings, in which he "begged the people to be reconciled to God." Love for souls overflowed his heart: "I seldom gave an exhortation without weeping, for my heart yearned over the souls of poor sinners. I could truly say, 'the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up.'"

The talents and zeal of young Lee did not escape the notice of the watchful travelling preachers. He was now called to the work of preaching Christ. They had secured to the cause of Methodism one whose power was felt for almost forty years, in every portion of the work. "On the 17th of November, 1779," he writes, "I preached for the first time in my life, at a place called the Old Barn. My text was 1st. John iii, 1, 2. I felt more liberty in speaking from the text than I expected to feel when I began." He had now broken ground, and went forward with great zeal, calling sinners to repentance. But a sense of his insufficiency painfully oppressed him; it is always so with him who is truly called of God to the work. The great question is, "who is sufficient for these things?" He writes: "I was so sensible of my own weakness and insufficiency, that after I had preached, I would retire to the woods and prostrate myself on the ground and weep before the Lord, and pray that he would pardon the imperfections of my preaching, and give me strength to declare His whole counsel in purity." He was soon called to supply the

place of the circuit preacher for a few weeks; he did so with fear and trembling, but the people were benefited by his preaching, and he was strengthened in the conviction that he was in the path of duty.

We must now behold the young preacher in a new and strange field of action. The storm of war had burst on Virginia and North Carolina; the people were startled by the reports of battles, and by the rumors that poured in, of the rapid approach of the British army. Lee, with many others in his county, was drafted to serve in the militia. He was in a a strait; he was opposed to fighting, but he must obey the civil government. He made up his mind to join the army, but determined not to fight. He reached the camp. The order was given to distribute guns to all the soldiers. Lee had resolved not only not to fire but not to touch a musket. "The sergeant," he says, "soon came round with the guns, and offered me one, but I would not take it. Then the lieutenant brought me one, but I refused to take it. He said I should go under guard. He then went to the colonel, and coming back, brought a gun and set it down against me. I told him he had as well take it away, or it would fall. He then took me with him and delivered me to the guard." The colonel soon came and vainly tried to convince him that he ought to fight in so good a cause; but he was resolute in his refusal. He was then left in charge of the guard. That he had the moral courage to make a soldier, cannot be doubted; but he was a preacher of the gospel of peace, and he could not, as he believed,

go into battle without violating the command, "Thou shalt not kill."

In the guard-room he found a Baptist who had refused to fight on the same ground. They had prayer in the guard-room that night, and he told the soldiers if they would come early in the morning he would pray with them. The soldiers gave him a good bed of straw, and covered him with their blankets and great coats. The next morning (Sunday) he was up by light, and began to sing. Several hundred soldiers gathered, joined him in the hymn, and they made the "plantation ring with the songs of Zion." He then prayed, his soul was filled, he wept, and all round him were scores of soldiers bathed in tears.

The tavern keeper, near whose house they were encamped, had heard the prayer as he lay in bed, his heart was touched, he wept as he listened, and soon came out and desired Lee to preach for them. He agreed to do so if the colonel would consent. The colonel was a humane man, though very profane. "When he heard I was about to preach, it affected him very much; so he came and talked to me on the subject of bearing arms. I told him I could not kill a man with a good conscience, but I was a friend to my country, and was willing to do anything I could while I continued in the army, except fighting." He was therefore released from confinement and promoted to the command of a baggage wagon. His first sermon was preached from a bench near the colonel's tent, from the text, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish."

In the afternoon he preached again, and "many

of the hearers were very solemn, and some of them wept freely under the preaching of the word. Lee continued with the army nearly three months. During the retreat which followed the news of Gate's disastrous defeat at Camden, he was promoted to the command of a small band of pioneers. The British army, flushed with success, was pressing on the retreating column.

In a skirmish a few on both sides were killed. A panic at once spread through the country, and the roads were soon filled with families flying, with what little property they could catch up, before the advancing foe. The scene was touching. Helpless women and children struggled along weary and wretched, hardly knowing whither they fled; among them were not a few men, wounded and bleeding. The colonel rode up to the side of the captain of pioneers and exclaimed, "Well, Lee! don't you think you could fight *now?*"

"I told him I could fight with switches, but I could not kill a man." He would have cut a sorry figure flourishing "a bunch of birch" in the face of a regiment of British grenadiers.

The retreat of the army brought the usual sufferings. Many soldiers fell sick, and many died. Lee was now in his true sphere as a preacher. When the poor men lay in huts or barns at the point of death, there he was found, "talking to them about their souls, and begging them to prepare to meet their God." These pious labors he continued until his discharge from the army. He gladly left the

camp, and took up his solitary line of march for his father's house.

He now began to think more seriously of devoting himself fully to the work of God as an itinerant. He says: "I had been for some time deeply exercised about travelling and preaching the gospel; and at times it appeared that I could not with a clear conscience resist the thought, and still was unwilling to go, fearing that I should injure the work of God, which I loved as I did my own life." He sought to escape these convictions of duty by entering the married state, but here he was disappointed, as he had prayed he might be if it was the will of God that he should enter the itinerant field. The great question still pressed on his conscience. "My exercises," he writes, "about travelling and preaching still continue. I have often been solicited by the preachers to take a circuit, but am afraid I shall hurt the cause of God, which I wish with all my heart to promote. I feel willing to take up my cross and follow Christ, but tremble at the thought of touching the ark of the Lord too hastily." While in this state of mind, a young man came to him one day and told him that under one of his sermons he had been cut to the heart, and had sought and found pardon. This greatly encouraged him; his feelings began to take the form of clear and strong convictions; he was treading the verge of that great field in which he labored so long and so successfully.

In the spring of 1782 he attended the Conference at Ellis' Meeting House in Sussex. The scene was new to him; it made an indelible impression on his

mind. He felt himself drawn toward the little band, then sitting in council, by a strange but delightful influence.

We shall allow him to paint this Conference scene. "The union and brotherly love which I saw among the preachers, exceeded every thing I had ever seen before, and caused me to wish that I was worthy to have a place amongst them. When they took leave of each other, I observed that they embraced each other in their arms, and wept as though they never expected to meet again. Had the heathen been there, they might have well said, 'See how these Christians love one another!' By reason of what I saw and heard during the four days that the Conference sat, I found my heart truly humbled in the dust, and my desire greatly increased to love and serve God more publicly than I had ever done before.

"At the close of the Conference, Mr. Asbury came to me and asked me if I was willing to take a circuit; I told him that I could not well do it, but signified I was at a loss to know what was best for me to do. I was afraid of hurting the cause I wished to promote; for I was very sensible of my own weakness. At last he called to some of the preachers standing in the yard a little way off, and said, 'I am going to enlist Brother Lee.' One of them replied, 'What bounty do you give?' He answered, 'Grace here, and glory hereafter, will be given if he is faithful.'

"Some of the preachers then talked to me and persuaded me to go, but I trembled at the thought, and

shuddered at the cross, and did not at that time consent."

He parted with the preachers, and returned home to settle his temporal affairs, and be ready for the call of the Church. In the fall he entered regularly on the work. He was sent by the presiding Elder, Caleb Pedicord, to aid Edward Dromgoole in forming a new circuit in the lower part of North Carolina. The Camden circuit was formed during their explorations, and it still stands as one of the oldest circuits in the Virginia Conference. At the next Conference, May, 1783, Jesse Lee was received on trial. He was appointed to a circuit in North Carolina, and labored with great zeal and success on different circuits in that State until 1785, when he accompanied Bishop Asbury on a tour to South Carolina. It was on this journey that his thoughts were first directed to the new and useful field in which he became the apostle of Methodism. He fell in with a young man from Massachusetts and from him learned many interesting particulars respecting the people of New England. He felt at once a presentiment that he was to plant Methodism in that land. He opened his mind to Asbury, but the Bishop thought the time for such a movement had not come. Nevertheless, Lee cherished the thought in his heart, and providentially he advanced toward the field in which he gathered his highest trophies.

First he was transferred to Maryland, and thence to a circuit lying partly in New Jersey and partly in New York. Here he reached the outposts of Calvinism. "Predestination, election, reprobation, decrees,

final perseverance, and other dogmas were thrown at him from every nook and corner of the country." Here he began his attacks on that system, against which he dealt such terrible blows in its strongholds. In the summer of 1789 the long cherished hope of Lee was realized. He was in New England. An unexplored country lay before him in all the beauty of its variegated landscape. His heart beat with a strange emotion. He was venturing on a desperate encounter. He had not a single acquaintance in all New England. Without learning, without patronage, he was to battle against a form of faith that had seized the hearts of the people with an iron grasp. Great were the odds against him, but he was not the man to quail before any opposition. He went in the strength of Him who said, "Lo, I am with you always." He opened his mission at Norwalk, in Connecticut. Denied admission into the house of a gentleman to whom he had letters of introduction, he took his stand in the street and began to sing. "While he was singing about twenty persons gathered about him. After singing he kneeled down on the ground, and prayed in a strain so devotional, so fervent, as to excite strongly the attention of the hearers, He then gave out a text, and began to speak, while the people were gathering in multitudes around him, in brief and pointed sentences. He then presented in succession a variety of beautiful images and poetic pictures, so as strongly to arouse the imagination, and vividly excite the attention of the people." His sermon made a powerful impression. "No such man has visited New England since the days of Whitefield,"

exclaimed the wondering people. No one, however, invited the weary and hungry man to rest and eat. The strange preacher passed on, and in a few weeks he had explored a large portion of the State and arranged a circuit. But he encountered great opposition. Within the limits of his first circuit there were "forty-five Congregational ministers, men of liberal education, settled over able congregations, and supported by large salaries secured by law." But what affected him more than any thing else, was the contrast between the open and generous hospitality of the South, and "the grudging, stinted, ekings of those who deemed his presence an intrusion." He was annoyed and embarrassed. On reaching a house to which he had been invited, he found the man and his wife had left home to avoid him; walking into a house which he had been invited to make his home, no one offered him a seat; helping himself to a chair, he tried to make himself at home; when the hour for preaching came, not one of the family would go; on his return from meeting scarcely a word was spoken to him; the man of the house held prayers, and said nothing to his guest; in the morning the whole family slept against time, and Lee was compelled to leave fasting. He alighted at the door of an inn, and told the hostess he was a preacher and wished to preach in the village.

"Have you a liberal education, sir?"

"Tolerably liberal, madam; enough I think to carry me through the country."

The same question was put by the selectmen of the place when he asked for the use of the court house.

He told them he did not like to boast of his learning, but hoped he had enough to get on with among them. His ready wit, keen retorts, when pressed by his opponents, and his free, social manner, gained him friends among the people, and greatly contributed to his success. On one occasion a plan was laid to expose his ignorance before the congregation. A pedantic lawyer was selected to lead the attack.

"When the people had all collected, the lawyer arose and addressed him in Latin. Lee suspected the stratagem, and returned the compliment by an address in Dutch. The lawyer took the Dutch for Hebrew, and concluded he had caught a Tartar." The discomfiture was complete. Lee was subjected to no more classical examinations.

Riding along one day, he was overtaken by a minister and a lawyer. They at once began to attack him on doctrinal points. The contest soon grew warm. Lee poured hot shot into them right and left. At length the lawyer broke out on him:

"Sir, are you a knave or a fool?"

"I am," replied Lee, "neither the one nor the other; but"—casting his eyes first at the lawyer and then at the minister—"I happen at present to be just *between the two*." He was soon travelling the road alone.

Here is another scene.

"Good morning Mr. Lee," said one of a couple of lawyers, who had determined to have some sport with him, "you are a preacher, I think?"

"Yes sir, I pass for a preacher."

"Have you a liberal education?"

"I have enough to get over the country with, but nothing to boast of."

"You preach without notes, I understand."

"Yes, preaching every day, and riding often a long distance, I have no time to write sermons, and, besides, I do not approve of *reading* sermons."

"Are you not liable in extemporaneous preaching to make mistakes?"

"O yes, I often make mistakes."

"Do you correct them as you proceed?"

"Why that depends wholly on the character of the mistake. If the mistake is a bad one, and liable to lead the hearer to any essential error, or a misconception of the subject, I recall the word and correct the mistake immediately; but if it be only a slip of the tongue, and very near the truth, only a slight variation in phraseology, I let it go. For example, I was about to say the other day, *the devil* is a liar, and the father of *liars*, and by a mere slip of the tongue I said, *the devil is a lawyer, and the father of lawyers.* But the thing was so near correct, being in fact the truth, but only a little varying in phraseology from what I would have said, that I passed right on, not thinking the mistake worth correcting."

The new preacher was hardly less formidable to the clergy than to the lawyers. He was challenged to a discussion by the minister at Reading. He rather declined, preferring to preach on experimental religion. The zealous Calvinist pressed him to the conflict, and he at length consented to preach, when he came again, on doctrines. He stood up in the midst of the advocates of Calvinism and handled the

system without mercy. He was extremely severe on the "Saybrook Platform, which contained the articles of faith of the Connecticut churches." A few days after, a tinker came along, seeking for old ware to mend. He was told that there might not be much broken ware to mend, "but if he could mend the Saybrook Platform, in which a Methodist preacher had knocked a sad hole, he might realize a good price for his services."

Extemporaneous preaching was something novel in New England. A bigoted and officious clergyman consented that Lee might preach in his church on condition that he should select the text and present it after Lee had entered the pulpit. To this Lee agreed. The matter was noised through the village, and on the day appointed the house was crowded. The utter discomforture of the new comer many of them thought was at hand. The introductory services being over, the minister handed Lee the text. It was Numbers 22nd chapter, and part of the 21st verse: "And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass."

"Rather a hard text this," thought Lee, though he said nothing, "to preach on at so short a notice."

The minister composed himself in his seat with a look of grim satisfaction, "Being well acquainted with the story of Balaam, Lee proceeded at once to describe his character, discanting largely on his avarice and love of the wages of unrighteousness, denouncing in severe language the baseness of the man who could use the prophetic office as a means of gain, and could endanger the very souls of the people of

Israel, for the sake of the wages which Balak offered. He then proceeded to describe the oppressed, enslaved and pitiable condition of the ass. He spoke affectingly of the patience of the creature under burdens, and spurs, and whippings, and abuses. He said the ass usually endured without complaining all the abuse heaped on him. Indeed, except the one in the history of Balaam, there had never been known an instance of an ass speaking and expostulating under ill treatment. He alluded to the saddle, and described how galling and oppressive it might become, especially under the weight of a large, fat, heavy man. At this point he cast a knowing look to the minister, who happened to be a very large and corpulent person. Having gone through with an exposition of the subject, he proceeded to the application. He said the idea might be new to them. Indeed, it had never thus struck him till the text was given him; but he thought Balaam might be considered a type and representative of their minister. Balaam's ass, in many respects, reminded him of themselves, the congregation of that town and the saddle bound on the poor ass, by cords and girts, evidently represented the minister's salary fastened on them by legal cords. Its galling and oppressive influence they had often felt, inasmuch as, in some instances, as he had been informed, the last and only cow of a poor man with a large family had been taken and sold to pay the tax for the salary of the well fed incumbent of the saddle."

After this specimen of his skill in extempore ser-

mons he was no more troubled by impertinent clergymen with sudden and strange texts.

Eight of the best years of his life, Jesse Lee spent in New England. Never did a man labor more earnestly to plant Methodism in an uncongenial soil. No dangers deterred him, no repulses disheartened him, no difficulties discouraged him. Indeed, the opposition that faced him at every step of his progress seemed to inspire him with fresh courage, and nerve him for greater labors. He left his impress on every important town in New England. His heroism called a host of ardent spirits to his aid, who strove to emulate the self-denying example of their leader.

Ten years after he entered the land of the Puritans, twenty-five flaming preachers were distributed over the wide field, and thirteen hundred souls had been gathered into the fold of Methodism. The adventures of Lee amid the homes of the Pilgrims would afford abundant material for a most entertaining volume.

The sober reality of truth would possess the pleasing excitement of romance. He was the first Methodist preacher, after Whitefield who stood up to preach on Boston Common. He reached the city and sought in vain for a house to preach in. On Sabbath afternoon, when the Common was filled with people, who lounged in the cool shade, or sauntered along the delightful walks, he entered, and making his way through the crowd, took his stand beneath the famous "Old Elm," then, as now, the pride of Bostonians.

He stood on a bench and began to sing. A few persons, attracted by the novel sound, gathered about

him. Having finished the hymn, he offered prayer. "His prayer, so free, so fervent, so spiritual, excited the deep attention of the persons, accustomed as they had been to hear only the dull, artificial, precise and long-winded prayers of the Puritan divines.

When he arose from his knees, he found a large audience assembled. He opened his Bible, gave out a text, and began to preach. His congregation rapidly increased, and when he concluded there were present not less than three thousand persons." The sermon over, the wondering multitude dispersed, no one took the preacher by the hand, no one invited him to a place of rest; he was allowed to depart as he had come, uncared for and unknown. He preached again the next Sunday to a larger crowd on the same spot, and then left the city. When he again appeared in Boston, it was on the verge of winter. The Common was deserted, save by those who hurried across it, wrapped in their cloaks, to their warm, cosy homes. Four weeks he walked the city, searching in vain for a room in which to preach Christ. On every hand he met refusals; sad and weary, he sat down to ponder on what should next be done. In the midst of the gloom a faint ray of light suddenly appeared; a letter came inviting him to visit the town of Lynn; he went and from that time it became his headquarters. Soon he obtained a foothold in Boston, and from that moment the march of Methodism was onward.

Lee was the pioneer of that resolute band who planted Methodism in the cheerless province of Maine. It was a territory of vast extent. Its soli-

tudes had never been broken by the voice of a Methodist preacher.

Lee planned an expedition into those unknown regions, and all alone took up his line of march. How faithfully he performed his duty will only be fully known in the day that shall reveal all things. Battling with storms, struggling through snow-drifts, facing the mighty winds as they swept down from the desolate mountains, he rode boldly forward on his great errand. Everywhere he preached the word; it took hold of the hearts of the people; societies were formed, churches built, and Methodism began to bring forth fruit. In Maine he found none of those difficulties which existed in the older settlements. As a new country it was specially adapted to the plans of Methodism. He and his co-laborers had only to go up and possess the land.

When Lee was called in 1797, to be the travelling companion of Bishop Asbury, he left in New England nearly forty travelling preachers and three thousand members.

For several years he continued to travel with Asbury, and assist in the business of the Conferences. He thus became widely known throughout the vast field of Methodism. His eminent labors, his sound judgment, his acknowledged ability and his ardent attachment to all the forms of Methodism, gave him great prominence among the preachers, and at the General Conference of 1800 he came very near being elected Bishop. On the second ballot there was a tie between him and Whatcoat, and on the third ballot Whatcoat was elected by a majority of four votes.

The last fifteen years of his life he spent in the Virginia Conference with occasional visits to the Southern and Northern portions of the work. He was elected Chaplain to the House of Representatives for several successive years, and there, as in every other position, maintained the integrity and purity of his character as a minister of the gospel.

"As a preacher he excelled." Thomas Ware, who heard him often, and who was an excellent judge of preaching, pronounced him the best every-day preacher he ever heard; he was sometimes surpassingly eloquent. He had the power both of convincing the judgment and arousing the passions. He gained much in power over the people by his manifestation of deep interest and feeling for them. He would be often himself moved to tears in the midst of his discourse, and sometimes his intensity of emotion would arrest his utterance. He would stop and weep over the people as Jesus wept over Jerusalem.

We may appropriately close this hasty and imperfect sketch with the following recollections from the pen of Rev. B. Devany:

"My acquaintance with Jesse Lee commenced at the Conference held at New Berne, N. C., February, 1807; but I was not intimate with him until 1810, when I was stationed in Petersburg, and he was my presiding elder. Here we were frequently together, and I often heard him preach. A warm friendship was formed between us that continued as long he lived. Brother Lee was of a stout, athletic frame, and weighed about 250 pounds, his skin was fair, his eyes grey, and his face full and broad; his step was

quick and firm, and he was quite active for one of his ponderous weight. The record of his labors shows that he possessed an iron constitution, by which he could say, 'in labors more abundant.' As a preacher he had no equal in the Virginia Conference. His preaching was plain, practical and experimental, carrying conviction to the heart; and so great was his variety that one never tired under his ministry, because he always seemed to be new. His 'preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.' But few men that I have heard, ever preached more fully under the influence of the Holy Spirit than he did. I once heard him in the county of Sussex, at a quarterly meeting on Sunday, preach to a large congregation, out of doors, from Isaiah xlii: 11: 'Let the inhabitants of the rocks sing,' &c. The sermon was truly eloquent and sublime. He was very much animated, the big tears coursed freely down his cheeks, and he shouted, 'glory to God! glory to God!' The effect on the congregation was thrilling almost beyond description.

"Up to this late period of my life, when I am old and grey-headed, when I have numbered my threescore years and eleven, I still retain a grateful recollection of that great and good man. Although there was such disparity in our ages, he, nevertheless, took me to his bosom, and to his friendship; and encouraged and instructed me as a father. The first time I heard him preach was one night at the above named Conference. His text was, Acts xvii: 6: 'These that have turned the world upside down are come

hither also.' He showed first, that through sin the world was now wrong side up, and second, that the design and effect of the gospel was to turn the world right side up. During that night some of the rowdies and rabble of the town, turned upside down every vehicle that they could lay their hands on, as well as all the small boats at the wharf.

"Mr. Lee possessed a rare talent for wit and keen satire, which he sometimes wielded with tremendous force against an opponent. I was present at the Conference in Raleigh, N. C., in 1811, where there were some complaints preferred against him for the neglect of his work while Chaplain to Congress, and something concerning the publication of his History of Methodism. He made his notes, and remained silent till his accusers had gotten through their speeches. He then arose with a playful smile, which seemed to indicate a little mischief ahead, and replied to each of them in consecutive order; and by argument, wit, and satire combined, he threw them off from him as easily as the lion shakes the dew-drops from his mane. Some of them, no doubt, regreted, as long as they lived, that they undertook to break a lance with him on that occasion.

He was plain in his dress, easy in his manners, and by reading and extensive travel, his mind was well stored with knowledge, and excellent anecdotes—hence he was always a welcome guest in the family circle. I will here give the substance of an anecdote which was related to me many years ago in the neighborhood where it was said the scene occurred. Lee was on a preaching tour in one of the lower counties

of North Carolina, where a Quaker gentleman chanced to hear him, and became so much interested, that he followed him to several appointments, and at last sought an interview with him at a private house. In the course of the conversation the Quaker said:

"Friend Lee, there is one thing in thy worship that I do not like."

"What is that?" said Lee.

"It is thy singing," replied the Quaker.

"O," said Lee, "upon this subject there is very little difference between us; we sing before we preach, and you sing when you preach."

Jesse Lee and Philip Bruce were the oldest preachers of the Virginia Conference at that time, and might justly be regarded as the fathers of the Conference; because they had been itinerating years before it was organized. But their labors are ended, and they have entered upon their great reward—many shall rise up in the Judgment day, and call them blessed."

CHAPTER VII.

The Christmas Conference—Organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church—Hearty unity among the societies—Action against slavery—Influence of Dr. Coke—Plan for a College—Opening of the Institution—Its destruction by fire—Re-establishment of the College at Baltimore—Again destroyed by fire—Visit of Dr. Coke to Virginia—His zeal against slavery—Excitement against him—Discussion at Conference—Petition to the Legislature—Asbury and Coke visit General Washington—The interview—Conference of 1785—Preachers sent to Virginia—Joseph Everett—Sketch of his life—Origin of the Presiding Elders' office—Extensive revivals—Asbury's travels in Virginia—Conference of 1786—Call for missionaries for Georgia—Financial operations of the Church—Conference for 1787—Richard Owings—Revival—Conferences of 1788—Valentine Cook—William McKendree—First Conference in the Holston country---Success in that year---Conversion of General Russell.

THE Christmas Conference assembled at Baltimore, on the 25th of December, 1784, and discharged its important duties within the brief space of one week. "We were in great haste," says Asbury, "and did much business in a little time." Every important question, however, was duly discussed, and was settled by a majority of votes.

As the Methodist societies in America now took the form of a church organization in the strict and proper sense, it will not be out of place to glance at the measures which were adopted.

The title selected was "The Methodist Episcopal Church."

The next act was to elect Dr. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury to the office of Superintendents of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America.

Asbury was then, on the first day of the Conference, ordained a Deacon, on the second an Elder, and on the third, Superintendent, by Dr. Coke, assisted by Richard Whatcoat, Thomas Vassey, and Rev. P. W. Otterbine, a minister of the German Church, "the holy, the great Otterbine"—at Asbury's special request.

Thirteen of the oldest and most experienced preachers were elected Elders; three were elected Deacons.

A form of Discipline was adopted substantially the same as that we now have. Mr. Wesley had sent over an abridgment of the Book of Common Prayer, used by the Church of England, and recommended its use by the American Methodists. This was done in a few places, but it met with much opposition from preachers and people, and the practice was soon abandoned. The Superintendents and some of the Elders adopted the use of the gown, and not unfrequently appeared before the people in full canonical dress. At the first meeting of Asbury and Jesse Lee, after the organization of the Church, the latter was astonished to see the new Bishop come out of his room in "gown, cassock and band," and go through the service with all the dignity and precision of an appointee of the Bishop of London. But such was the opposition to both these practices, that they were wholly given up in the course of a few years. The people could not

fail to associate the use of the gown and the prayer-book with a ministry of loose morals and vicious lives.

The organization of the Church gave very general satisfaction to the Methodists. They were "heartily united together," says Jesse Lee, "in the plan which the Conference adopted, and from that time religion greatly revived." William Watters assures us that the action gave great satisfaction throughout the societies.

The thousands of Methodists scattered through the land could now receive the Sacraments from the hands of their own pastors, and have their children dedicated to God by men in whose piety they placed the highest confidence. Upon no Christian organization since the apostolic age, has the Head of the Church more distinctly stamped the seal of his approbation. But while this is true of all those plans of Methodism which looked directly to the spreading of Scriptural holiness over the land, the same cannot be asserted of other measures, which brought the Church into fearful collision with public opinion in many portions of the country, and sometimes with the civil government, on a most exciting question.

We refer, of course, to the question of slavery.

Under the lead of Dr. Coke, the Christmas Conference, took measures to free the Church wholly and forever from the supposed evil of slavery. As the Methodists in Virginia were vitally interested in the action of the Conference and were powerfully affected by it, we shall transcribe the entire record on this subject.

"Question 42—What methods can we take to extirpate slavery?

"Answer—We are deeply conscious of the impropriety of making new terms of communion for a religious society already established, excepting on the most pressing occasion: and such we esteem the practice of holding our fellow creatures in slavery. We view it as contrary to the golden law of God, on which hang all the law and the prophets, and the unalienable rights of mankind, as well as every principle of the Revolution, to hold in the deepest abasement, in a more abject slavery than is perhaps to be found in any part of the world, except America, so many souls that are capable of the image of God.

"We therefore think it our most bounden duty to take immediately some effective method to extirpate this abomination from among us: and for that purpose we add the following to the rules of our society, viz:

"1. Every member of our society who has slaves in his possession, shall, within twelve months after notice given to him by the assistant, (which notice the assistants are required immediately, and without delay, to give in their respective circuits,) legally execute and record an instrument, whereby he emancipates and sets free every slave in his possession who is between the ages of forty and forty-five immediately, or at farthest, when they arrive at the age of forty-five.

And every slave who is between the ages of twenty-five and forty immediately, or at farthest, at the expiration of five years from the date of said instrument. And every slave who is between the ages of twenty and twenty-five immediately, or at farthest, when they arrive at the age of thirty.

And every slave under the age of twenty, as soon they arrive at the age of twenty-five at farthest. And every infant born in slavery after the above mentioned rules are complied with, immediately on its birth.

2. Every assistant shall keep a journal, in which he shall regularly minute down the names and ages of all the slaves belonging to all the masters in his respective circuit, and also the date of every instrument executed and recorded for the manumission of the slaves, with the name of the court, book, and folio, in which the said instruments respectively shall have been recorded; which journal shall be handed down in each circuit to the succeeding assistants.

3. In consideration that these rules form a new term of communion, every person concerned, who will not comply with them, shall have liberty quietly to withdraw himself from our society within the twelve months succeeding the notice given as aforesaid: otherwise the assistant shall exclude him in the society.

4. No person so voluntarily withdrawn, or so excluded, shall ever partake of the supper of the Lord with the Methodists, till he complies with the above requisitions.

5. No person holding slaves shall, in future, be admitted into society, or to the Lord's supper, till he previously complies with these rules concerning slavery.

N. B. These rules are to affect the members of our society no farther than as they are consistent with the laws of the States in which they reside. And respecting our brethren in Virginia that are

concerned, and after due consideration of their peculiar circumstances, we allow them two years from the notice given, to consider the expedience of compliance or non-compliance with these rules.

Question 43—What shall be done with those who buy or sell slaves, or give them away?

Answer—They are to be immediately expelled: unless they buy them on purpose to free them."

Comment on these rules is unnecessary. The reader can form his own judgment. We shall soon see what sad effects their publication and advocacy produced in Virginia.

The Conference adopted another measure, far different from this, and every way worthy of Methodism. Asbury had for several years cherished the plan of an American Kingswood School, and for its establishment had already obtained some subscriptions from the wealthier Methodists. On consulting Dr. Coke soon after his arrival he declared in favor of a college. Asbury yielded his consent, and on the rise of Conference, "a plan for erecting a college" was published. The objects proposed were thus stated in a circular, signed by Coke and Asbury:

"The college is to receive for education and board the sons of the Elders and Preachers of the Methodist Church, poor orphans, and the sons of the subscribers, and other friends. It will be expected that all our friends who send their children to the college, will, if they be able, pay a moderate sum for their education and board; the rest will be taught and boarded, and, if our finances will allow of it, clothed, gratis. The institution is also intended for the bene-

fit of our young men who are called to preach, that they may receive a measure of that improvement which is highly expedient as a preparation for public service."

The site selected for the College was a beautiful eminence, embracing six acres, about twenty-five miles from Baltimore. It was a charming spot. From every part of the hill the eye ranged over a variegated landscape of vast extent. The water view was exceedingly fine. The Chesapeake Bay, in all its grandeur, stretched away in one direction, till its blue waves seemed to blend with the distant horizon. From the north, the Susquehanna rolled its bright waters through the richest and boldest scenery. The area of vision from the summit of the hill was from thirty to fifty miles in extent. The main building was of brick, 108 feet long, 40 feet wide, and three stories high. From the roof, which could be easily reached, the prospect was truly magnificent. The enterprise was pushed forward with great vigor, and in December, 1787, the college was opened with a dedicatory sermon from Bishop Asbury on a singular, and as some thought, an ominous text, 2 Kings iv: 40, "O, thou man of God, there is death in the pot."

The institution went into operation with a board of instruction consisting of a president and two tutors. The range of studies was quite extensive, embracing English, Latin, Greek, Logic, Rhetoric, History, Geography, Natural Philosophy and Astronomy. The Hebrew, French and German languages were to be added to the course whenever the finances of the college would justify the additional outlay. The boys

were placed under the strictest regulations, drawn up probably by Wesley himself. All play was interdicted, and agriculture and architecture were recommended as affording a better as well as a more useful recreation. Great care was taken in the selection of suitable text books; those that contained anything immodest were rigidly excluded, and only those admitted that contained strong sense with genuine morality.

The newly established seminary was christened "Cokesbury College," after the two bishops. It went forward with a fair prospect of success Dr. Coke has left us an account of a public exhibition at the college two years after its opening, which will give some idea of the mode of instruction pursued in the first Methodist institution of learning in America. In May 1789, the doctor personally examined all the classes in private, and so well were he and Asbury pleased with their progress, that they determined to have "a public exhibition of their respective improvements and talents." It was held in the afternoon. Two of the boys who "displayed great strength of memory and propriety of pronunciation in the repetition of two chapters of Sheridan on Elocution, were rewarded by Asbury with a dollar each." One little fellow "delivered *memoriter* a fine speech out of Livy with such an heroic spirit and with such graceful propriety," that Dr. Coke presented him a little piece of gold. To those boys who excelled in gardening, Asbury presented a dollar each. But what cheered the heart of these good men more than any thing else, was the knowledge that God was at work

among the students, and that a number of them were truly awakened to the great interests of salvation.

In 1792, the college was in a prosperous condition, seventy students were in its halls, the Maryland legislature was willing to grant an act of incorporation, thus enabling it to confer degrees, the preachers and people were working for its endowment, when suddenly all these bright hopes vanished. The whole establishment was burned to the ground. How the fire originated could never be ascertained. Nothing was saved; the library and philosophical apparatus were consumed, and the beautiful hill, so lately crowned with Cokesbury College, was covered with a pile of smouldering ruins. Every effort was made to discover the incendiary, the Governor of Maryland offered a reward of one thousand dollars for the apprehension of the perpetrators of this foul deed. But it was in vain; and who burned Cokesbury College still remains a mystery.

After this calamity, Asbury determined to have nothing more to do with colleges. But Dr. Coke resolved to make another effort. By the aid of some of his friends in Baltimore, he purchased a large building in the city, and fitted it up for the reception of students. The new institution was soon in a flourishing condition, and gave promise of greater success than had attended Cokesbury. But a similar fate awaited it. In 1797, it was accidentally burned down; and thus ended the attempts of the Methodists to found a college. The total loss sustained by the burning of the two colleges, was not less than fifty thousand dollars.

From this digression, let us return to the course of events in Virginia. Two days after the Christmas Conference adjourned, Asbury rode fifty miles through frost and snow, to Fairfax county; the next day he had an exceedingly cold ride of forty miles, to Prince William, thence he pressed on through Warrenton and came to the Rappahannock, which he found frozen from side to side. He forded among the floating ice in a track broken by a wagon, and got over safely. That night he found shelter at a little ordinary; in the front room were a company of wagoners at cards; in the next room Asbury and his companion held prayers, and then slept in peace. In the morning they paid nine shillings and sixpence for the entertainment. He reached Henry Fry's, in Culpeper, Saturday, and on the next day he read prayers, preached, ordained Henry Willis an Elder, and baptized several children. This was the first ordination performed by Asbury in Virginia. He then passed rapidly on toward the South.

In the spring of 1785 Dr. Coke visited the State and preached with his usual zeal. In attempting to cross an angry, swollen stream between Alexandria and Colchester, he came near losing his life. His horse was swept from under him, and both were carried some distance by the raging waters. The horse reached the shore in safety, while the Doctor lodged on a little island formed by the tangled roots of a tree which grew in the middle of the stream. No sooner had he landed here than a large branch of a tree came down with the flood and lodged on his back. "I was now jammed up for a considerable time, expecting that

my strength would soon be exhausted and I should drop between the tree and the branch. Here I plead aloud with God in good earnest; one promise which I urged I remember well: 'Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.' I felt no fear at all at the pain of dying, or of death itself, or of hell; and yet I found an unwillingness to die. All my castles, which I had built in the air for the benefit of my fellow-creatures, passed in regular array before my mind, and I could not consent to give them up. It was an awful time. However, through the blessing of my Almighty preserver, I at last got up my knee, which I had endeavored at in vain, upon the tree, which I grasped, and then soon disengaged myself, and climbed up the little bank." Shivering with cold, he walked a mile to the nearest house. The white people were away, and were not expected to return that night, but an old negro man took him in, and lent him an "old ragged shirt, coat, waistcoat, and breeches, built a large fire, and made him as comfortable as he could. Before bed time a man who had found his horse and saddle-bags brought them to the house, having tracked the Doctor from the creek. He was rewarded with a guinea, and then the weary Bishop stretched himself on a bed on the ground and slept soundly all night.

While the Doctor, on this tour, confined himself to the legitimate work of preaching Christ, he was everywhere hailed with joy as the messenger of peace. But his zeal against slavery carried him beyond the bounds of prudence. He was now in the midst of an institution which he detested, and his spirit was stirred

within him. He must lift up his voice against it, or, as he conceived, be false to his sacred trust. His ardent mind was not long held in doubt. He determined to pass the Rubicon, let the result be as it might. While preaching in the month of April, to a crowded congregation, in a barn, he took occasion to refer to the subject of slavery and denounced it in unmeasured terms. Much excitement followed; a number of persons withdrew from the house and determined to inflict summary punishment on the preacher as soon as he came out. It is said that one lady raged in a very unladylike manner, and offered the mob fifty pounds if they would give him one hundred lashes. As soon as the Doctor stepped from the door he was surrounded by an excited crowd, who proceeded to put their threats into execution. At this moment a magistrate present seized the foremost man of the party; he was supported by another gentleman who bore the rank of colonel and who threw himself before the mob in an attitude of battle. Abashed by these demonstrations, they hesitated a moment, and in the lull of the storm the Doctor was borne off by his friends.

The next day he preached again in the same neighborhood; a large number of men stood round armed with sticks and clubs; in silence they waited till the preacher should touch on the exciting question, but his text not leading him in that direction, or having learned wisdom from the scenes of the preceding day, he avoided the subject, and was permitted to leave the ground unmolested. In some sections the public mind was greatly exasperated against the Doc-

tor. In one county, he was presented before the grand jury and a true bill found; and although he had left the county, not less than ninety persons engaged to pursue him, and bring him back to justice. They actually started, but after a while gave over the chase and returned home. In another county similar measures were taken against him, but the bill was thrown aside after it reached the jury-room.

From Virginia he passed into North Carolina, but there he observed a profound silence on the subject, inasmuch as the State laws forbade emancipation. At the Conference, however, held in that State in the latter part of April, a petition was drawn and presented to the Legislature, praying the passage of an act allowing emancipation. Sanguine hopes were entertained of the success of this plan, but it ended in nothing. It was at this Conference, the first ever held in North Carolina, that Jesse Lee entered the lists, and broke a lance with Dr. Coke on the question of slavery. There was probably no material difference between them as to the nature of slavery, they both looked on it as an evil; but Lee regarded the action by which the Church sought to complete emancipation as ill-ordained and ill timed. The one looked only at the naked fact of slavery, the other viewed it in its social and political relations. The contest was a short one. Dr. Coke, conceiving that the opposition of Lee to the rules of the Conference amounted to a justification of the system, and that he intended to defend it, objected to the passage of his character. This brought the young Virginian promptly to his feet with a cutting speech, in the midst of which a

rude interruption from the fiery little Doctor made his very blood tingle. The close of the conflict left them both ill at ease; and Dr. Coke, finding he was wrong in the accusation and interruption, apologized with his characteristic frankness, and both were friends again.

When the Doctor again entered Virginia he was greatly mortified to learn that it was feared his bold preaching against slavery might have a tendency to incite insurrection among the slaves. He immediately began to enforce the duty of obedience on all while in a state of bondage, in terms not less strong than those in which he had so lately denounced the system. Thus, by urging the slave to obey while in subjection, and at the same time urging the owner to free him from motives of natural justice, he hoped, but vainly hoped, to preserve a sort of balance in the public mind. No plan could have been more deceptive. "It was a deceitful exterior which cherished beneath its surface a volcano which was preparing to explode." The explosion took place at William Mason's in Brunswick, where the Conference met on the 1st of May. Asbury's notice of the meeting is brief but significant: "Rode to W. Mason's, where we are to meet in Conference. I found the minds of the people greatly agitated with our rules against slavery, and a proposed petition to the General Assembly for the emancipation of the blacks. Colonel —— and Doctor Coke disputed on the subject, and the Colonel used some threats: next day brother O'Kelly let fly at them, and they were made angry enough. We,

however, came off with whole bones, and our business in Conference was finished in peace."

Even this brief entry in Asbury's journal will give some idea of the state of feeling among the people. Dr. Coke furnishes more information. A great many of the leading men of the Church met the preachers at the Conference, and urged the suspension of the obnoxious rules. They declared that great uneasiness already prevailed in the societies, and if the preachers insisted on enforcing the new law, Methodism would be greatly crippled, if not utterly ruined. They plead earnestly, but they plead in vain. Coke and his friends stood firm. The rules must be enforced at all hazards. The contest at length reached it crisis. The conference declared that they would withdraw the preachers from every circuit in which the rules were not allowed to operate to their full extent.

The people could not think of giving up the preaching of the gospel; they must have that, even if they had to take with it the mandatory rules of the Conference. In sorrow they addressed a letter to the Conference requesting the re-appointment of the preachers.

A petition was drawn up to be presented to the Legislature of Virginia, praying the passage of an act for the immediate, or gradual emancipation of the slaves. A copy was given to each preacher, and he was instructed to obtain as many signatures as possible in his circuit.

Taking different routes at the close of this Conference, Coke and Asbury met a few weeks after at

Alexandria. While there they received an invitation from General Washington to visit him at Mount Vernon. "We waited on General Washington," says Asbury, "who received us very politely, and gave us his opinion against slavery." Dr. Coke gives us a fuller account of the visit. "He received us very politely, and was very open to access. He is quite the plain country gentleman. After dinner we desired a private interview, and opened to him the grand business on which we came, presenting to him our petition for the emancipation of the negroes, and entreating his signature, if the eminence of his position did not render it inexpedient for him to sign any petition. On the subject of emancipation, he informed us that he was of our sentiments, and had signified his thoughts to most of the great men of the State, though he did not see it proper to sign the petition; but if the Assembly took the subject into consideration, he would signify his sentiments by a letter."

Though greatly encouraged by the opinions of Washington, the friends of these extreme measures found it impossible to put them into execution without disrupting the Church. The petition went to the shades of oblivion before it had time to pass around a single circuit. One month after the bold stand taken in Virginia, the preachers were compelled to suspend the rules at a Conference at Baltimore. The propriety of this action even Dr. Coke admitted. He "was the more willing to accede to it, as, being about to take his leave of the Continent, and return to England, he was anxious to leave the societies in peace." This admission by his biographer, shows the sad

effects which had been produced by Dr. Coke's mistaken zeal against slavery. Hardly anything could have been more fortunate for the peace of the Church than his departure at that time. He afterward, in his journal, acknowledged his error in preaching against slavery in Virginia in the face of the law.

As a matter of mere convenience, three Conferences were held in the spring of 1785; the first in North Carolina, the second in Virginia, and the third at Baltimore. The business of the three Conferences was arranged and published as if every thing had been done at the same time and place. The numbers are not given by detail in the Minutes, but the aggregate of 18,000 members and 104 preachers, shows a clear gain of more than three thousand members, and twenty-one travelling preachers over the preceding year. Twenty-two preachers were received on trial; three located, two had died, and one was laid aside. There were fifty-two circuits supplied by one hundred and four preachers. In Virginia twelve circuits were reported, taking in nearly the whole of the State; to this vast field twenty-five preachers were sent. Lancaster was the only new circuit added this year in Virginia; it embraced the whole of the Northern Neck. Joseph Everett, who was appointed to this new field, may be called the father of Methodism in that portion of Virginia. No man in his day was a better specimen of that fearless band that composed the "thundering legion" of Methodism.

He was born in Maryland on the 17th of June, 1732. His parents were members of the Established Church, and he was religiously educated in all the

forms and ceremonies of that Communion. But to the spirit and power of religion he grew up an utter stranger. Many years he lived in vice and dissipation, a bold leader among wicked men. When over thirty years of age, he was awakened to a sense of his awful condition, in the great New Light revival, as it was called. He was pierced through by the sword of the Spirit; as his life had been extremely wicked, his convictions were deep and powerful. He found no rest day nor night; the great deep of his heart was broken up, and he set his face to seek the Lord in earnest. He broke off from his sinful ways, read the Scriptures, prayed, meditated, and by the use of all the means of grace within his reach, struggled to find pardon and peace. God heard his cries, and gave him deliverance. He at once united with the Presbyterians, or as they were then called, the "New Lights," and became a zealous Christian. But his love soon grew cold; anger, pride, self-will triumphed, and he fell away a poor backslider. He now threw off restraint, and again became openly wicked. His conscience still retained some sensibility, and he felt alarmed at his wretched condition, but the peculiar tenets of his religious system came to his relief. He thought it impossible for him to live without sin, that no sin would be imputed to the believer, and at death all guilt would be purged away. These views had a most pernicious effect on his heart and life. In this sad state he lived many years. When the Revolutionary war broke out he entered the army and served a term in the militia of his native State. On his return home from the army he found that the Meth-

odist preachers had visited his neighborhood. He at once conceived a violent hatred for them, and arrayed himself against them as an opposer and persecutor. He vented his wrath in all sorts of hard names, calling them deceivers, false-prophets, and urging the people not to listen to them. About this time Asbury passed through his county, and preached at various places. Everett was invited to go and hear him. He did so, and under the sermon his prejudices began to melt away. He went again and was more favorably impressed. He now began to attend the Methodist meetings regularly. He became concerned for his soul. His Methodist friends now put in his hands the writings of Wesley and Fletcher. He at once saw the vast gulf between their system and that of Calvinism. He became an earnest seeker of salvation and was soon healed of his backslidings. He joined the Methodists, and soon gave proof that God had called him to the work of saving souls. Everett had all the elements of a powerful pioneer preacher. His frame was robust, he was bold as a lion; he never feared the face of man; he denounced sin in terrific language; he hurled the terrors of the Lord into the midst of Satan's strongholds with irresistible power. He moved among the churches like a flame of fire. He was indeed a mighty evangelist, full of faith and the Holy Ghost. He lived in the midst of revivals. His voice rung out over the hosts of Israel like the peal of a trumpet calling to battle.

Sometimes, before preaching to a large crowd, he would divest himself of his coat and cravat, and then launch forth in a sermon or exhortation that thrilled

every heart and brought sinners by scores and hundreds to their knees. He was ever in the front rank pressing on after the flying foe. Though he was almost fifty years old when he entered the itinerancy, he displayed all the ardor of youth, and his vigorous constitution bore him through twenty-five years of active service. Five years after retiring from the effective roll, he rested, a war-worn veteran, awaiting the summons to enter and take his crown. It came at last and as the vision opened before him, he fell, shouting, "Glory! glory! glory!"

The memory of Joseph Everett is blessed.

From this Conference we may date the origin of the office of Presiding Elder, though this title was not given till the Conference of 1789. This important office had its origin in the wants of the Church. The Christmas Conference, as we have seen, elected only thirteen Elders out of the whole number of preachers. The only plan therefore by which they could supply the people with the Sacraments, was by districting the whole work, and appointing an Elder to each district, whose duty it was to visit each circuit in his district, quarterly; preach, and administer the Sacraments. In the absence of the bishop, this officer had the direction of all the preachers within his district.

While this Conference felt constrained to suspend the rules on slavery, the system was denounced in the strongest terms. "We do hold in the deepest abhorrence the practice of slavery; and shall not cease to seek its destruction by all wise and prudent means." This shows that the rules were suspended, not because

of any change in the minds of the preachers on the vexed question, but because of the bitter feelings which had been stirred up in Virginia and other portions of the work.

In the Minutes of this Conference we find for the first time those brief and expressive notices of deceased preachers, which for a number of years came from the pen of Asbury. Among those who had fallen in the field of battle, was, "George Mair, a man of affliction, but of great patience and resignation; and of excellent understanding." In the death of Caleb B. Pedicord the Church lost a bright and shining light. He is described in three short lines in the Minutes; "a man of sorrows; and like his Master, acquainted with grief; but a man dead to the world, and much devoted to God." A freer hand though not a more loving heart, has described this devoted and useful man.

"There was one for whom Asbury looked in vain, one who had been his companion in many a long and weary journey, one whose eloquent voice had often made the hearts of listening thousands

> 'Thril as if an angel spoke,
> Or Ariel's finger touched the string.'

Pedicord, the gentle spirited, the generous minded, the noble souled, the silver tongued Pedicord, had fallen, had fallen in his youth, fallen in his opening glory and abundant promise. Asbury looked for him and he was not. The grave had closed over his body, and his spirit had passed to the land where only spirits so refined, so sensitive, so ethereal as his, find congenial sympathy and rest."

The whole connection, North and South, was blessed with revivals this year, notwithstanding the agitation produced in the early part of it by the slavery rules. The suspending act restored confidence and kind feelings in a good degree, and both preachers and people engaged heartily in the work of religion. "There was a great revival of religion this year," says Jesse Lee, "in most parts of the Connection. On the eastern shore of Maryland the work was great, and many souls were brought into the liberty of the children of God." The good work spread far to the southward, and new fields were continually opening before the reapers. The torch of truth was carried into many dark places by pious families who moved from Virginia to South Carolina and Georgia, and a fire was kindled which has continued to burn higher and brighter unto this day.

In the latter part of this year, the indefatigable Asbury was again toiling through Virginia. Leaving Alexandria an hour before day, on a very damp morning in November, he was seized on the road with a violent inflammation of the throat Benumbed with cold and suffering great pain, he reached near nightfall a miserable house, where there were no beds fit for use, and not a candle to be had. After waiting two hours for a little boiled milk, he passed a restless and wretched night. The next day he rode twenty-three miles under a high fever, the inflammation in his throat constantly increasing. Finding no place that promised him comfort, he pushed on, sick as he was, passing Hanover Court House, and "anxious to get to a good lodging and amongst kind people."

Reaching a tolerable house, and catching a glimpse of the accommodations, he rode on, almost too ill to sit in the saddle. Calling at "a petty ordinary," he was recommended to go to a widow Chamberlayne's where he would find a kind reception and comfortable quarters. It was now late, very cold, and five weary miles lay between him and the place of rest; but on he went.

"The Lord opened the heart of this widow," he writes, "and she received me under her roof; I found her to be a motherly woman, and to have some skill in my complaint." He suffered greatly till the ulcer in his throat broke. He was scarcely over this attack, when he was seized with a painful inflammation in his foot. In this condition he rode to the house of a friend in James City county, where he was compelled to lie by. He was not idle. Though suffering almost constant pain, his time was mainly spent in writing letters to the preachers urging collections for the College, and in arranging the entire Discipline under proper heads, divisions and sections."

Never did a Christian Bishop live more fully up to the rule he gave his preachers, "Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed."

There were three Conferences in the spring of 1786. That for Virginia was held at Lane's Chapel in Sussex county, on the 10th of April. There is no distinction in the Minutes; the action of the three bodies is combined as the action of one, and so published. Twenty-four preachers were received on trial, four located; two had fallen in the work. Fifty-three circuits are put down in the Minutes, supplied by one

hundred and sixteen preachers. No new circuit was added this year in Virginia, but several were gained in other portions of the work. The members for the year are given in detail, and for the first time the number of colored members is given distinct from the whites. The whole number of whites is put down at 18,791, of colored at 1,890. From Virginia, 3,965 white members were reported, and 379 colored.

At this Conference a call was made for missionaries to go to Georgia. It was at once answered by more than could be spared from the work in Virginia. Only two were finally selected, Thomas Humphries and John Major. They went forth in the name of the Lord, and were made the messengers of peace to thousands in that distant field. Major labored faithfully two years and then fell at his post. His brethren wrote of him: "John Major—a simple hearted man; a living, loving soul, who died, as he lived, full of faith and the Holy Ghost; ten years in the work; useful and blameless." How expressive are these brief obituary notices! They speak more than whole pages of eulogy.

It may be interesting to glance at the financial operations of the Church, which are more fully recorded than in the Minutes of any previous Conference. The yearly collection for supplying the deficiencies of the preachers amounted to £182 6s. 6d. The contributions toward the preachers' fund for the superannuated preachers, and the widows and orphans of preachers, were £38 5s. 4d. Out of this £14 were paid for the funeral expenses of Jeremiah Lambert, who died soon after his return from missionary service in the

West Indies. For the first time we find the question: "What was collected for and expended on missionaries this year?" Answer: £54 17s. The amount raised for Cokesbury College was £800 2s. 11d.; there had been expended for the same during the year £1,618 14s. 2d.

There is scarcely a trace to be found that will guide us in recording the progress of Methodism in Virginia during this year. With his usual brevity, Jesse Lee gives us but a single paragraph: "This was a prosperous year with our societies; many were added to us, and joined among us; and the work of the Lord revived in general where we labored, and in some places souls were gathered in by scores. Many of the old Christians took a fresh start, and the holy fire kindled and spread from heart to heart."

From Asbury's journal we glean a few items of interest. He rode from the Conference to Petersburg. He preached, but "had a dull time." Pushing on northward he reached Alexandria, where he made the following entry: "Hail, glorious Lord! After deep exercises of body and mind, I feel a solemn sense of God on my heart. I preached by day in the Court House on 1 Peter iii: 10; and in the evening at the Presbyterian Church on Luke xix: 41, 42. Alexandria must grow; and if religion prospers among them it will be blessed. I drew a plan, and set on foot a subscription for a meeting house." Two months after he was in the Valley. This was a terrible trip for a sick man, as Asbury was nearly all his life. "We have had rain," he writes, "for eighteen days successively, and I have ridden about two hun-

dred miles in eight or nine days; a most trying time indeed." He preached at Shepherdstown, Millburn's, and other places, on his way to Winchester.

"The Lutheran minister began a few minutes before I got to Winchester. I rode leisurely through the town, and preached under some spreading trees on a hill, on Joshua xxiv: 19, to many white and black people. It was a solemn, weighty time; all was seriousness and attention. I then went once more to Newtown; here I preached on 2 Tim. iii: 16, 17. I had but little freedom in speaking. I called on Mr. Otterbine; we had some free conversation on the necessity of forming a church among the Dutch, holding Conferences, the order of its government, &c."

Winchester was first visited by the Methodist preachers, probably before the close of the Revolutionary war. Their first sermons were preached from the steps of the Court House. Their first preaching house was a small cabin; their second, was the residence of the grandfather of the Rev. J. Carson Watson of the Virginia Conference, to whom I am indebted for the following incident: "When the Methodists first preached in Winchester, the Lutheran minister (of whose congregation my grandmother was a member,) came to her and told her that the Methodists were the false prophets, and would stand but two years, and forbade her permitting them to preach in her house. She replied, "If they are false prophets, we will let them preach the two years." They proved true prophets to the family that received them and to hundreds of others.

The Bath Springs, in Berkeley county, were a favorite resort of Asbury; he received great benefit, for a number of years, from the use of the waters.

In July he writes: "I came to Bath, the water made me sick. I took some pills, and drank chicken broth, and mended. I am ill in body and dispirited. I am subject to a headache, which prevents my reading or writing much, and have no friends here; but I desire to trust the Lord with all my concerns." Having no appointments for several weeks, a most unusual thing with him, he determined to remain and try fully the healing virtue of the waters. His stay at the Springs can hardly be called rest. Though quite weak and considerably affected by the water, "he spoke in public every other night." He dealt faithfully with the gay crowd around him: "I spoke plainly and closely in the play-house, on, "O! wicked man, thou shalt surely die." He complains that the people could not be induced to attend preaching, except on Sunday; this he hoped to remedy by building a church and holding night meetings.

The following is the last entry in his journal, before he left Bath: "A pleasing thought passed through my mind, it was this, that I was saved from the remains of sin. As yet I have felt no returns thereof. I have spent twenty-three days at this place of wickedness." Surrounded by sin he realized the fulfilment of the promise: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee."

What a charming picture he draws of the home he reached after leaving "this place of wickedness."

"Came to my old friend, B. Boydstone's. I had the happiness of seeing that tender woman, his wife, who careth for the preachers as for her own soul; full oft hath she refreshed my spirit; her words, looks and gestures, appear to be heavenly." But here with friends so dear and congenial, he could make no stay. "Arise and depart for this is not your rest," was the command, and he was soon in the saddle pressing to the North.

In New York he fell sick and was confined to his room for eight days. We shall be pardoned for introducing the reader into the sick room: "I was taken ill, and was confined about eight days, during which time I was variously tried and exercised in mind. I spent some time in looking over my journals which I have kept for fifteen years back. Some things I corrected, and some I expunged. Perhaps, if they are not published before, they will be after my death, to let my friends and the world see how I have employed my time in America. I feel the worth of souls, and the weight of the pastoral charge, and that the conscientious discharge of its important duties requires something more than human learning, unwieldy salaries, or clerical titles of D. D., or even *bishop*. The eyes of all, both preachers and people, will be opened in time."

In January, 1787, Asbury was again in Virginia. "We rode near fifty miles on our way to Westmoreland; next day by hard riding, we came to Pope's, in Westmoreland, but I have not been more weary many times in my life." At a quarterly meeting in

the Northern Neck "many simple and loving testimonies were delivered in the love-feast."

Riding through the snow to Fairfield, he found trouble brewing. "Here a captain R. had turned the people out of the barn in which worship was held, and threatened to take Brother Paup to jail if he did not show his authority for preaching; after all this vaporing of the gallant Captain, when the affair was brought before the court, Captain R. found it convenient to ask pardon of our brother, although he sat on the bench in his own cause; so the mattter ended. The Lord is at work in the Neck; more than one hundred have been added to the Society since Conference, who are a simple, loving, tender people." At a Presbyterian Meeting House in Lancaster, he "delivered a very rough discourse; it was a close and searching time;" many, both white and black, received the Sacrament. He had a crowd of careless sinners at Mrs. Ball's, a "famous heroine for Christ." "A lady came by craft, and took her from her own house, and with tears, threats and entreaties, urged her to desist from receiving the preachers, and Methodist preaching; but all in vain. She had felt the sting of death, some years before, and was a most disconsolate soul; but having found the way, she would not depart therefrom."

From the Neck he went on towards Gloucester. He writes: "Cold times in religion in this circuit, compared with the great times we have had in Lancaster."

Thence he passed on, preaching at Yorktown, Williamsburg, Craney Island, Portsmouth and inter-

mediate points. His route now lay toward North Carolina. "Brother Poythress," he writes, "frightened me with the idea of the great swamp, the east end of the Dismal; but I could not consent to ride sixty miles round; so we ventured through, and neither we nor our horses received any injury. Praise the Lord! Our passing unharmed through such dangers and unhealthy weather, feelingly assures me that I am kept by the immediate interposition of his providence."

The Virginia Conference for 1787 assembled at the house of William White, near Rough Creek Church, in Charlotte county, on the 19th of April. Dr. Coke was present, having recently arrived from the West Indies, whither he had been driven by a terrible storm while on his second voyage from England. "We had much preaching," says Asbury, "morning, noon and night, and some souls were converted to God."

On Sunday Dr. Coke preached on the qualifications of a deacon, to a vast congregation of three thousand persons. We have no means of ascertaining what measures this Conference recommended or adopted, beyond the record in the general Minutes. The statistics we give show what was done at the three Conferences of the year. Thirty-five preachers were admitted on trial; ten desisted from travelling; one had died.

The returns of members for the whole Connection amounted to 21,949 whites, and 3,893 blacks. Of these there were in Virginia 7,274 whites, and 645 colored members; the increase was 3,300 whites and 265 blacks. There were sixty-three circuits in all,

supplied by one hundred and thirty-three preachers. Three new circuits were formed in Virginia; Greenbrier and Bath in the central, and Ohio in the northwestern portion of the State.

This year died Richard Owings, the first American Methodist preacher. He was awakened and converted in Maryland, under the preaching of Robert Strawbridge. He was licensed as a local preacher, and though burdened with the cares of a large family, labored with great zeal and success in planting Methodism in Virginia and Maryland, before the entrance of the regular itinerants. He often prepared plans and led the way for enlarging the old, and forming new circuits in different portions of the work.

The notice of his death in the Minutes gives a short but expressive eulogy. "Though he had charge of a large family, he labored much in the word and doctrines; travelling for weeks and months in the back settlements in the infancy of the work. He was a man of honest heart, plain address, good utterance and sound judgment." In company with John Hagerty, he planted Methodism in the Valley of Virginia. The following is from "Kercheval's History of the Valley."

"About the year 1775 (more probably about 1780) two travelling strangers called at the residence of the late Major Lewis Stephens, the proprietor and founder of the town now distinguished in the mail establishment as 'Newtown Stephensburg,' and inquired if they could obtain quarters for the night. Major Stephens happened to be absent; but Mrs. Stephens, who was remarkable for hospitality and religious im-

pressions, informed them that they could be accommodated. One of them observed to her: 'We are preachers, and to-morrow being the Sabbath, we shall have to remain with you until Monday morning, as we do not travel on the Sabbath.' To which the old lady replied: 'If you are preachers, you are the more welcome.'"

John Hagerty and Richard Owings were the names of the preachers. The next morning notice was sent through the town, and the strangers delivered sermons. This was doubtless the first Methodist preaching ever heard in our Valley. It is said they travelled east of the Blue Ridge before they reached Stephensburg, on a preaching tour, and probably crossed the Ridge at some place south of Stephensburg.

A number of the people were much pleased with them, and they soon got up a small church at the place. The late John Hite, Jr., his sister, Mrs. Elizabeth Hughes, John Taylor and wife, Lewis Stephens, Sr., and wife, Lewis Stephens, Jr., and wife, and several others joined the church, and in a few years it began to flourish."

Several years before his death, Richard Owings gave himself wholly to the work of the ministry. His last field of labor was Fairfax circuit. For more than half the year he labored with success, and then fell at his post like a true soldier. Leesburg is the place from which the spirit of the first American Methodist preacher took its flight to heaven.

The churches were blessed this year with an extraordinary revival of religion. "The heavenly flame," says Jesse Lee, "spread greatly in various directions.

Such a time for the awakening of sinners was never seen before among the Methodists in America." The work was most powerful in the southern counties in Virginia. It broke out in mid-summer, and continued through the year. The whole country between the James and Roanoke Rivers, and from the Blue Ridge to the sea, was swept by the flame of revival. The strong men in the field, were Bruce, O'Kelly, Ogburn, Cox, Easter and Hope Hull, each one a tower of strength; they were men of great powers of endurance, mighty in prayer, full of faith and the Holy Ghost.

Petersburg felt the presence of the Spirit in a wonderful manner. The town had never before been so shaken by divine power. Never had the people seen such manifestations of the presence of God in their midst. Prayer meetings were held in the town and in the adjacent country, and the simple exhortations of the Christians were as signally blessed as the most powerful sermons. Scarcely a meeting was held, where souls were not converted. The members took hold of the work in earnest, and while the preachers were away in other parts of the field, they pushed on the battle with glorious success. Powerful as was the work here, it was far greater in Brunswick and Sussex. The meetings in those circuits were frequently continued without intermission for five or six hours, and sometimes through the whole night. So great was the concern of the people that they could hardly be persuaded to seek necessary repose.

At a Quarterly Meeting held at Mabry's Chapel in Brunswick circuit, the power of God fell on the

vast multitude like fire from heaven. Hundreds were awakened and fell to the ground with strong cries and tears. The meeting lasted but two days, and yet above one hundred souls were converted. Two days after another meeting was held at Jones' Chapel in Sussex county, where the display of Almighty power was still more signal and awful. The excitement exceeded anything that had ever been seen. Scores of young converts from the meeting at Mabry's gathered here and spread the holy fire among the people. The work began before the preachers reached the spot. Groups of Christians might be seen here and there under the trees embracing each other, some weeping aloud, others in silent ecstasy, and others praising God with all their might. The sinners that stood around gazed on the scene in silent awe, then wept, then trembled, then fell to the earth and cried for mercy. The sight of the prostrate mourners was enough to pierce the hardest heart. When the preachers were within half a mile they heard the voice of the multitude shouting and praising God. When they came nearer they heard sobs and cries mingling with the shouts of triumph. "When we came to the Chapel," says Philip Cox, "above sixty were down on the floor, groaning in loud cries to God for mercy." The preachers immediately went among the mourners, comforting and encouraging them. The scene was truly awful. On every side lay the slain of the Lord. Some struggled as in the agonies of death, others lay motionless as if already dead. Among the mourners lay scores of believers, utterly helpless, overcome by the power of God.

Many remained in this state for hours together, and when they came to themselves, it was with loud praises to God. Such a time had never been seen by the oldest saints. Thus the first day closed. The next morning the Society met at an early hour to partake of the Communion. During this solemn feast, some of the preachers went out of the house, and preached to the vast throng in the forest. While they spoke, the power of God came down among the people in a wonderful manner. So loud was the cry of the convicted, that the preachers could not be heard.

Writing of the scenes of this day, Cox says: "It is thought our audience consisted of no less than five thousand on the first day, and the second of twice that number. We preached to them in the open air, and in the chapel, and in the barn by brother Jones' house at the same time. Here were many of the first quality in the county, wallowing in the dust with their silks and broadcloths, powdered heads, rings and ruffles, and some of them so convulsed that they could neither speak nor stir."

The work went on with increasing power through the day. Night came on, but still the work increased. The mourners were collected in the house, and Christians labored with renewed zeal to instruct and comfort them. "Many of the penitents were in the most awful distress, and uttered such doleful lamentations that it was frightful to behold them, and enough to affect the most stubborn hearted sinner. But many of these were filled with the peace and love of God in a moment, and rising up would clap their hands

and praise God aloud. It was then as pleasing, as it had before been awful, to behold them."

Among the converts were many who had come only to ridicule the work of God. They were loud and stout in their opposition to this, to them, new way of saving souls. In a moment, while they were looking on, many such persons were stricken to the earth under powerful conviction, and converted in a few hours, and returned home clothed and in their right minds. "So mightily did the Lord work," says Jesse Lee, "that a great change was wrought in a little time." Two hundred and fifty souls were converted during this meeting.

Not long after a meeting of great power was held at Mr. F. Bonners, not far from Petersburg. In one day fifty souls were converted. The cries of distress and the shouts of joy were heard afar off. Here again many proud and careless scoffers fell beneath the power of the truth, were converted and went home rejoicing in Christ. At Jones' Hole Church, twelve miles from Petersburg, similar scenes were witnessed. The people gathered early in the day. The exercises began with singing, exhortation, and prayer. The Lord moved among them in power, and before the preachers reached the church, many were penitent, and some had found peace. The people could hardly be persuaded to listen to a sermon. The voice of the preacher was swept away amid sobs, and prayers, and shouts. An earnest appeal to them to be calm and listen to the word of life, restrained for a while the torrent of feeling; but toward the close of the sermon, and as the speaker began to apply the truth to their con-

sciences, it broke forth again with irresistible power. The flame swept through the house, and hundreds were deeply affected. "Some prayed as if they were going to take the kingdom by violence, others cried for mercy as if they were dropping into eternal misery, and some praised God with all their strength, till they dropped down helpless on the floor." In every direction convicted sinners were calling on the Lord for mercy; some kneeled, others lay in the arms of their friends; many too weak to kneel or stand, lay stretched on the floor, while some were convulsed with every limb stiff and rigid. In the midst of this scene the floor of the house gave way with a loud crash and sunk down several inches, but was unheard or unheeded. No one was injured, and many knew nothing of the accident until the meeting closed. Great was the triumph of that day. Many souls were brought to God. Sinners that refused to yield were struck with awe at the conversion of their friends and neighbors, and few left the ground without wounds from the arrows of the Almighty. Great as was the revival of 1776, this far exceeded it. Indeed, nothing like it had ever been seen or heard of in Virginia. Eight hundred were converted in Amelia circuit, sixteen hundred in Sussex, and eighteen hundred in Brunswick. The work was greatest in these circuits, but it was not confined to them; in many other circuits the revival was powerfully felt, and hundreds of souls were added to the church. Many meetings were held all over the Southside country, equal in power and results to those we have described. The outpouring of the Spirit was general. Not alone at

the great gatherings, where the preachers met thousands of eager hearers, was the Lord present to kill and to make alive. On all occasions, great and small, the glory of Israel's God appeared. While Philip Cox was preaching the funeral of a little child on the text: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven," to a congregation of a hundred, "fifty of whom were old professors, out of the other fifty the Lord spoke peace to thirty before the meeting broke up." Cox, having been lamed by an accident, preached this sermon sitting on a table. The next day he preached again in the woods, sitting in a chair placed on a table, and more than sixty souls were converted. But it mattered little whether preachers were with the people or not. In prayer-meetings, in class-meetings, in little social gatherings, where two or three met in the name of Christ, Christians were made happy and sinners converted.

It was not uncommon to hear of persons being converted while at work in their houses, or while plowing in the fields. Often would they gather, white and black, from adjoining corn-fields, and begin to sing, pray and exhort; the sound would call others from more distant places, until scores were assembled and the exercises continued until many found peace, and returned with gladness of heart to their daily toil.

The genuineness of this great work "received a thousand attestations in the altered lives, persevering fidelty, and increasing holiness of those who were brought from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

In the spring of 1788, the revival still progressed in many places. Jesse Lee, who had been travelling a circuit in Maryland, made a visit to Virginia in March, and has left us a few facts of much interest. In Petersburg he preached to a large company, on the words, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" "I felt," he writes, "great liberty in speaking, and the hearers were much affected; from the beginning there were many silent tears shed. Before I was done the power of God was manifested among us. One woman dropped from her seat like a person struck dead; but in a little while she was enabled to rise and praise a sin-pardoning God aloud; and many shouted for joy. I observed a woman, finely dressed, just at my right hand, who trembled and shook as though she had an ague. At length she stood up, and I expected every moment to see her drop down in the place where she stood. In a little time, a young woman came and took hold of her, and they both fell down on their knees together. The young woman began to pray aloud for the mourner. In a little time another young woman came, and kneeling down prayed with all her might. By this time there were several crying aloud, and the house rang with the cries of the people, both men and women. I began to weep myself, and was forced to stop preaching. In a little time the woman near me, for whom the young women were praying, was enabled to rise and praise God for having pardoned her sins. Cries and groans were heard in every part of the house. I could not help praising God aloud among the people. Many careless

sinners were cut to the heart. Such a powerful meeting I have not seen for a long time; and blessed be God, I not only saw it but I felt it also."

This simple picture will give an idea of the meetings that were held all over the country. The incidents that attended this great outpouring were often of the most startling character.

At a meeting, where fifty souls were converted, "three daughters of one Jesse Lee, a Baptist preacher, (uncle to Jesse Lee, our preacher,) were down in the floor, crying to God to deliver them. Their brother came in, and got one the daughters up to carry her out, swearing that she should not expose herself there; but before he got her out of the house, the Lord exposed him, striking him to the floor and constraining him to cry "Save, or I sink into hell!"

Jesse Lee has given his view and his vindication of this work, which was naturally attended with much excitement.

Writing of his visit to Virginia, he says: "I surely have cause to bless and praise God that I came to Virginia this spring, to see my old friends. But such a change in any people I never saw. There are many of the young converts that are as bold, zealous, and as solemn as old Christians. There are but few, either men or women, boys or girls, but will pray when called upon, and sometimes without being asked. I have never seen anything more like taking the kingdom by violence than this. I have no doubt but many will say this is not of God, for God is not the author of confusion. But I answer it must be of God; for the people are justified, and many are

sanctified; and the devil cannot do this. But some will say, so much noise cannot be of God; but the Lord has by this means awakened and converted many that were careless before. Let the Lord work his own way. It is clear that the Lord has his way in the whirlwind. If we could have all the good, without the confusion, if such there be, it would be desirable; but if not, Lord send the good, though it should be with double the confusion. We are too apt to say, "Lord prosper thy work, by this or that means." But, if we pray for the work to revive, let this be our cry, "Lord make use of some means to save the people," and let him work his own way. If souls can be converted, I will be contented."

To this brief, common-sense view of the work of God every sincere Christian must agree.

In the year 1788, seven Conferences were held. They began at Charleston, South Carolina, on the 12th of March, and ended at Philadelphia, on the 25th of September. The Conference for Virginia proper, assembled at Petersburg on the 17th of June. It was the first sesion ever held in that town.

Jesse Lee informs us that the Conference was appointed at Benjamin Crawley's, in Amelia, but on account of affliction in his family, it was removed to Petersburg. Asbury refers to this Conference with his usual brevity. "Our Elders and Deacons met for Conference. All things were brought on in love. The town folks were remarkably kind and attentive; [has not the same verdict been given by the preachers ever since?] the people of God in much love. I preached a pastoral sermon, under a large arbor, near

the borders of the town, on 1 Timothy, iv: 13-16, with considerable consolation. Ordained Henry Ogburn and John Baldwin, deacons, and Edward Morris and Ira Ellis, elders."

The returns of members amounted to 9,410 whites and 1,832 blacks; the increase was over 2,000 white and nearly 1,200 colored members. The Minutes show the combined action of all the Conferences. Forty-eight were received on trial; three desisted from travelling; six were under partial location on account of their families, but were subject to the order of the Conference; four faithful men had fallen from the ranks, and entered upon the rest of heaven. Of Elijah Ellis, who closed his life and labors in Lancaster circuit it was said, "a deacon four years in the work; steady, humble, diligent and faithful, who spent himself in the work of God in Lancaster, Virginia."

Among the young preachers received this year into the regular work, Virginia gave a number, most of whom filled a useful, and some a brilliant place in the history of the Church.

Bennett Maxey, Henry Birchett, John Lee, Stephen Davis, Valentine Cook and William McKendree, are names that will ever hold a prominent place among the heroes of Methodism.

The race of some of these holy men soon closed, but their influence and example did not die. Birchett, Lee and Davis ended their useful lives in the full maturity of their strength, willing martyrs to the cause of Christ. Maxey, beloved and venerated, extended his labors far into the present century. For

more than thirty years Cook was a powerful and efficient preacher. The name of McKendree is an ointment poured forth through all the borders of Methodism.

Valentine Cook was born in Pennsylvania, but was reared in the "Greenbrier Country," now Monroe county, Virginia, to which his father removed when he was very young. He was a lad of quick and vigorous mind; but in the wild country where he lived, the means of instruction were very limited. The schools were scarce, and the teachers indifferent. He however, acquired the rudiments of a common English education, and made some progress in the German language. His moral principles were strong and his habits correct. Like most young men in a country abounding with game, he had a passion for hunting. Every spare hour from the school or the farm, found him roaming the forests with his dogs and his rifle. Many a night he spent in the woods, far from the settlements, sleeping surrounded by his trusty hunting dogs, and that too, when the savages yet lurked on the borders of those frontier counties. In the sketch of his life, by Dr. Stevenson, the following narrative of one of his early adventures with Indians, is given from the pen of his son.

"A party of Indians, as it was supposed, had stolen some of my grandfather's horses. My father, young as he then was, determined to attempt their recovery. Without consulting his father, brothers, or any one else, he set out, single-handed and alone, on their trail. He had not proceeded far, however, before he discovered the horses carefully tied up in a

dense thicket. After looking about for sometime with his rifle in hand, cocked, primed, and ready to fire at a moment's warning, but neither seeing nor hearing anything that indicated the presence of Indians he walked directly up to the horses, and having set his rifle against a neighboring tree, he began to untie them. While thus employed, an Indian suddenly sprang from the bushes in the direction of his gun. They both seized it at the same moment. The struggle was fearful—life or death depended on the issue! But when on the eve of getting the mastery and securing his rifle, a second Indian made his appearance and soon a third. Finding himself completely overpowered, he yielded at once, and surrendered himself to their hands with as much apparent cheerfulness as he was able to command. After carefully surveying him from head to foot, laying their hands on his long black suit of hair, and looking him full in the face for some time, one of the most elderly of the party exclaimed, 'Booh!' and added, 'Indian! young Indian!' The whole company then retired a few paces from him, and after a brief interview, they returned. Those were moments of awful suspense. My father's fate was sealed as he verily supposed; and with his heart lifted up to God in prayer, he endeavored, as best he could, to resign himself to the issue, whatever it might be; but to his utter astonishment and inexpressible joy, they handed him the end of the rope with which the horses were tied, and said in broken English, "Indian won't kill Indian boy!' They then kindly assisted him in adjusting the horses, and when ready

to start, bade him as he understood it, an affectionate 'fare-well,' and committed him to the guidance and protection of the 'Great Spirit.' My father always believed, that from his very dark complexion, and singularly straight, coarse, black hair, the Indians were of the opinion that he might, perhaps, belong to their own race."

Young Cook's love of the wild, free life of a hunter, did not entice him wholly from his studies. He kept the improvement of his mind steadily in view, and a portion of his time was strictly devoted to the study of such books as he could command.

In his small library the Bible was the central volume. This he read with eagerness and prayerful attention. His memory became stored with many of its richest passages, and in after life, he could readily repeat entire chapters, memorised long before his conversion.

To this diligent searching of the Scriptures, he added fervent prayer, day and night, for the pardon of his sins. He was an earnest seeker of salvation, though groping in darkness.

At this time a Methodist preacher entered the frontier field in which he lived, and preached with zeal and success.

A general excitement soon followed; some embraced his views; many opposed them; young Cook received him as the messenger of God, and soon became a bold defender of this "new religion," as it was contemptously called. He met with strong opposition, not only from his young associates, but from his own family. His parents protested and threat-

ened, but nothing daunted, the young disciple held on his way. He defended his views with so much ability and in so kind a spirit, that his family yielded their opposition and left him to pursue the path he had chosen. He now fell into doubts and under the heaviest discouragements he was tempted to give up all hope of finding pardon. For several months he was tossed and buffeted by the adversary. Amid all these fears, there came on his mind the solemn conviction that he should do something toward the salvation of his father's family. He opened his mind to an elder brother, and they determined to propose to the old gentleman the establishment of family worship. To their great joy, he not only consented but promised to give them his assistance. Most of the family, and many of the neighbors were soon after converted, and the house of Valentine Cook soon became a "house of prayer."

Soon after the opening of Cokesbury College, Valentine, Jr., was entered as a student. He had already given much promise of usefulness, and his character was already marked by a deep and earnest piety. How long he remained at the College, is not known, but it is certain that while there he formed those habits of close thought, which distinguished him in after life.

For ten years, Valentine Cook was one of the most efficient of our pioneer preachers. No abler defender of the doctrines of the Bible as taught by Methodism could be found in the ranks of the itinerancy. He was mighty in the pulpit, and in prayer he was like Israel, prevailing with God.

He is thus described by one who knew him: "Valentine Cook was slightly above the medium height and size. There was no symmetry in his figure; his limbs being disproportionately long, seemed more like awkward appendages than well fitted parts of a perfect whole. He was what is called stoop-shouldered, to such a degree that his long neck projected from between his shoulders almost at a right angle with the perpendicular of his chest. His head, which was of peculiar formation, being much longer than usual from the crown to the point of the chin, seemed rather suspended to, than supported by the neck. A remarkably low forehead, small, deeply sunken hazel eyes, a prominent Roman nose, large mouth, thin lips, a dark, sallow complexion, coarse black hair, with here and there a thread of gray, formed a *tout ensemble*, in which nature seemed to have paid no regard to order, strength, or beauty."

The same writer thus describes him as a preacher: "As the shadows of the night descended, the people from town and country began to assemble; and though the rain was descending in torrents, every apartment of the house was soon filled to overflowing. The hour for preaching arrived, Mr. Cook took his position in the entry, by a small table, upon which lay the 'Old Family Bible.' Resting his hand reverently on that blessed volume, he commenced repeating, in a somewhat indistinct undertone, the affecting hymn beginning with

'In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear,
Till a new object struck my sight
And stopped my wild career.'

Before he reached the last stanza his voice had become perfectly clear, and so pathetic and impressive, that many faces were suffused with tears. After reading the hymn, he raised the tune himself, and the audience united with him in the delightful exercise of singing. The prayer which followed, was simple, solemn and affecting. On rising from his knees, he straightened himself up, and after looking round upon the congregation a few moments, without opening the Bible, on which his right hand again rested, he announced as his text, Mal. iv: 1: 'For behold the day cometh.' It is impossible to give more than an imperfect outline of the discourse. Man's responsibility to God was the leading thought. In the commencement he dwelt at some length upon the all-pervading presence of him with whom we have to do. Never, until then had I been so deeply impressed with the fact that God was all around me, above me, beneath me, within me. The sinfulness of sin and its dreadful consequences, were portrayed in language and imagery most powerful and startling. I felt persuaded that no unconverted sinner, not wholly given up to hardness of heart and reprobacy of mind, could listen to that discourse without exclaiming in the bitterness of his anguish, 'The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.' I could distinctly hear the partially suppressed groans and prayers that rose from different parts of the house.

In conclusion the great remedial scheme was brought to view. Jesus, with garments rolled in blood, was

announced as the only hope of a ruined world. We saw and felt, as if under the clear light of heaven itself, how God could be just through the intervention and sacrificial death of his Son, and yet the justifier of penitent believing sinners. The ability and willingness of Almighty God, as revealed in Jesus Christ, and him crucified, to save—to save now—to the uttermost and forever—were presented in such strains of simple, fervent, loving, melting eloquence, that the entire assembly was roused, excited, and overwhelmed. Some were pale with fear; others radiant with hope. Prayer and praises, cries and songs, were loudly commingled. While the wail of awakened sinners was heard in various parts of the house, from other directions came the shouts of rejoicing saints. The midnight watch had come and gone before the people could be induced to leave the strangely consecrated place."

Many instances are recorded of Cook's faith and power with God in prayer. The following is a signal case. The leader of the class to which his family belonged was taken very ill. "My husband," says Mrs. Cook, "was with him most of the time, and was greatly distressed on his account. The case was at length pronounced hopeless by his physicians. Mr. Cook coming into the room when it was supposed the sick man was actually dying, approached his bed, and said to him in a distinct tone of voice, 'Brother G——, do you know me?' 'O yes,' was the reply. 'Do you desire,' said he, 'that we continue to pray for your recovery?' 'I leave that,' said the afflicted man, 'to you and them.' He then walked into the

room where the physicians were in consultation. 'What,' said he, 'is the conclusion? Must brother G—— die at this time?' 'He must without the intervention of Almighty power,' was the reply. 'Well then,' said Mr. Cook, 'I'll go to Him in whose hands are the issues of life and death. I shall file two pleas for his restoration; the one on account of his family, and the other on behalf of the Church.' He then retired to the woods. In less than an hour he returned, and was told that there was no change for the better. He again retired, and did not return till some time after dark. When he entered the sick man's room, he exclaimed, 'Brother G——, the Lord has heard our prayers: your life will be prolonged for the sake of the Church and your family.' He immediately left for home, declining to exchange a single word with any one as he retired. In less than a week, Brother G—— was walking about his room."

During a camp-meeting in Kentucky, "While Mr. Cook was preaching on these words, 'Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with a stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee,' a gentleman arose in the congregation, and exclaimed under great excitement, 'Stop! stop, till I can get out of this place!' Mr. Cook immediately paused and said, 'Let us pray for that man.' The gentleman started from his place, but just as he reached the outskirts of the assembly, he sank to the earth and began to cry aloud for mercy."

After ten years hard service as a travelling preacher, Cook married and settled in the state of Kentucky.

He spent his days in the cultivation of a small farm, in teaching, for which he was well qualified, and in preaching with unabated zeal and success. In the West, his memory is cherished by thousands, who will rise in the last day and call him blessed.

The name of William McKendree is the brighest that appears this year on the rolls of Methodism. He was born in King William county, July 6, 1757. Of his early history very little is known. It is said that when quite young he became seriously impressed by reading the bible at school, but having no competent instructors, he grew up without the experimental knowledge of religion. When nearly twenty years old he heard a Methodist preacher for the first time. Deeply convinced of sin, he sought connection with the Society and was received as a seeker of religion. By a free intercourse with the gay and careless he lost his concern, and became in a great measure indifferent to the welfare of his soul. He retained, however, the form of religion, though he had never fully known its power. He served in the army of the Revolution, and it is supposed attained the rank of adjutant, but whether he was ever in battle is not certainly known. During the great revival of 1787, he lived in the bounds of Brunswick circuit, where he had the privilege of hearing that great evangelist, John Easter. Writing of these times he says:

"My convictions were renewed. They were deep and pungent. The great deep of the heart was broken up. Its deceit and desperately wicked nature was disclosed, and the awful, eternally ruinous consequences, clearly appeared. My repentance was

sincere. I became willing, and was desirous to be saved on any terms. After a sore and sorrowful travail of three days, which were employed in hearing Mr. Easter, and in fasting and prayer, while the man of God was showing a large congregation the way of salvation by faith, with a clearness which at once astonished and encouraged me, I ventured my all upon Christ. In a moment my soul was relieved of a burden too heavy to be borne, and joy instantly succeeded sorrow. For a short space of time I was fixed in silent adoration, giving glory to God for his unspeakable goodness to such an unworthy creature."

Having obtained the blessing of pardon, he pressed on to a higher region of Christian experience. The doctrine of holiness was then faithfully preached by the Methodist ministry, and thousands attested the power of Christ to save from all sin.

McKendree reached this happy state, and thus describes it: "Eventually I obtained deliverance from unholy passions, and found myself possessed of ability to resist temptation, to take up and bear the cross, and to exercise faith and patience, and all the graces of the Spirit in a manner before unknown." He now began to be impressed with the thought that he must preach. He dreaded the fearful responsibility of the work. Great was the conflict between his feelings and his sense of duty. He unbosomed himself to John Easter, and for a while continued with him on the circuit; but he was soon overcome by his fears and returned home.

Still the conviction followed him; he found no peace, and at length he resolved to offer himself to

the Conference. He was accepted, and sent to the Mecklenburg circuit. As it is always a privilege to hear such a man speak, we shall give his own narrative: "I went immediately to the circuit to which I was appointed relying more on the judgment of experienced ministers, in whom I confided, than on any clear conviction of my call to the work; and when I yielded to their judgments, I firmly resolved not to deceive them, and to retire as soon as I should be convinced that I was not called of God, and to conduct myself in such a manner that if I failed, my friends might be satisfied it was not for want of effort on my part, but that their judgment was not well founded. This resolution supported me under many doubts and fears—for entering into the work of a travelling preacher neither removed my doubts nor the difficulties that attended my labors. Sustained by a determination to make a full trial, I resorted to fasting and prayer, and waited for those kind friends who had charge and government over me to dismiss me from the work. But I waited in vain. In this state of suspense my reasoning might have terminated in discouraging and ruinous conclusions, had I not been comforted and supported by the kind and encouraging manner in which I was received by aged and experienced brethren, and by the manifest presence of God in our meetings, which were frequently lively and profitable. Sometimes souls were convicted and converted, which afforded me considerable encouragement, as well as the union and communion with my Saviour in private devotion, which he graciously allowed me in the intervals of my very imperfect

attempts to preach his gospel. In this way I became satisfied of my call to the ministry, and that I was moving in the line of my duty."

Such was the beginning of a career which has shed undying lustre over the history of American Methodism. The first twelve years of his ministry were spent in Virginia; eight years he was the leader of the noble band of preachers who planted Methodism throughout the great West; twenty-seven years he filled the office of Bishop.

Perhaps no man ever raised up in America, understood more clearly the whole economy of Methodism, and certainly no man has ever been more fully approved as an administrator of Discipline.

"In person, Bishop McKendree was a little above the medium height, and very finely proportioned, his form in his younger days giving notice of great physical strength and activity. The first glance at his countenance convinced one that he stood before a man of great intellectual vigor, but whose predominant trait of character was mildness. There were both height and breath to his forehead; and under heavy eyebrows, his eyes, black, impressive, and somewhat protruded, gave a continual evidence of the fires glowing within. His mouth had a more than usually intellectual expression; his chin was square but not clumsy; and, on the whole, it may be truly said, that a finer countenance, or one more expressive of piety, firmness and intelligence, could scarcely be found." The following reminiscence of this great and good man is from the pen of Rev Wm. C. Larrabee.

"I had once, and once only, the good fortune to

see him and to hear him. It was at the session of the New England Conference at Durham, in the State of Maine, in the year 1814. I was then a small boy, but I had heard of the fame of Bishop McKendree. On Sabbath morning I made my way over the fields and pastures, and through the woods, to the old Methodist church, which stood in a rural region on the hillside. When I arrived at the house, I found no room—not so much as about the door. Being, however, a little fellow, I continued to work a tortuous passage through the crowd, and to reach a position near the altar, in full view of the preacher. He was just rising to give out his text. His tall and manly form, his dignified and commanding appearance struck me with admiration. Distinctly and impressively he read his text. Deut. xxx: 19, "I call heaven to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Choose life that both thou and thy seed may live."

Without apology or labored introduction, he proceeded at once to his main subject. His manner of speaking was different from any I had ever heard. He would speak for a few sentences rapidly in a colloquial style. Then he would rise in declamation, and make the old house ring with the powerful tones of his magnificent voice. Suddenly he would descend to a lower key, and utter tones sweet and soft as the Eolian lyre. At times the feelings of the audience would become, under his stirring appeals, most intense, and one simultaneous shout would leap from a hundred tongues. Young as I was, I was deeply affected with wonder and delight at the powerful elo-

quence and commanding appearance of the distinguished stranger. The man, the manner, the voice and the discourse, all made on my youthful heart an impression which the long years that are past have failed to wear away."

The same writer thus describes the scene in the Light Street Church, Baltimore, on the first Sabbath of the General Conference, at which McKendree was elected bishop:

"Among the appointments for preaching, there was announced for the Light Street Church the name of William McKendree. When the hour of morning service arrived, there appeared an immense multitude of people, of all ranks and conditions of society congregating in a populous city. The members of the General Conference were there. The polished and hospitable citizens were there, and the slaves were there. The house was crowded, positively packed full—full in the main body, full in the first gallery, full in the second gallery, and full in the pulpit. All eyes were turned to the stranger, as, at the appointed time, he entered the pulpit, and stood before them. He was a man of tall form and commanding appearance; but he was clothed in very coarse and homely garments, and his movements seemed, to the genteel part of the audience, awkward, and his manners rustic.

"He read the hymn without much regard to rhythm or melody. He prayed with indistinct and faltering voice. He read his text without any regard to impressiveness. He introduced the main subject of his discourse with a few common place and uninteresting

remarks. The spirit of the people died within them. Their expectations of an interesting discourse from the Western stranger seemed wholly disappointed. They made up their minds, as Christian people should, to bear as patiently as possible the dull and awkward sermon about to be inflicted on them.

But when the discourse was about half finished, a 'change came over the spirit of their dream.' Samson arose in his might and shook himself. The lion of the West made the walls of the Light Street, as he had often made the forests of Kentucky, ring with his powerful voice. The effect was tremendous. An electric impulse thrilled through every heart. The whole congregation seemed overwhelmed. Tears burst from the eye, and sobs and shrieks from the voice. Multitudes fell helpless from their seats, sudden as if shot with a rifle.

"The preacher then changed the tone of his voice, and then followed from the enraptured multitude shouts of joy and acclamations of triumph and praise. He changed again, and a sweet and holy influence, like the mellow light of Indian summer floating over the autumn landscape, seemed to invest the assembly. When he came down from the pulpit, the people gazed at him as they might at some messenger from another world, who had spoken to them in terms such as they had never heard before. The preachers with one accord said, 'That is the man for a bishop. The same week he was elected.

"No man in the American Methodist Church, at that time, united in his person so many admirable qualifications for the office as did William McKen-

dree. As a man, he was single-hearted, magnanimous, generous, and of most refined and exquisite sensibility. As a Christian, he was deeply pious. As a minister, he was, in power and success, a prince among his brethren. He was thoroughly acquainted with the Discipline and government of the Church; probably better versed in ecclesiastical law than any of his contemporaries except Asbury."

In the spring of this year, (1788,) the first Conference was held in the rugged and mountainous country bordering on the Holstien River. Asbury gives a graphic account of his travels in this wild region.

"After getting our horses shod we made a move for Holstien, and entered upon the mountains; the first of which I called steel, the second stone, and the third iron mountain. They are rough and difficult to climb. We were spoken to on our way by most awful thunder and lightning, accompanied by heavy rain. We crept for shelter into a little dirty house where the filth might have been taken from the floor with a spade. We felt the want of fire, but could get little wood to make it, and what we gathered was wet. At the head of Watawga we fed, and reached Ward's that night. Coming to the river next day, we hired a young man to swim over for the canoe, in which we crossed, while our horses swam to the other shore. The waters being up, we were compelled to travel an old road over the mountains. Night came on—I was ready to faint with a violent headache—the mountain was steep on both sides. I prayed to the Lord for help. Presently a

profuse sweat broke out upon me, and my fever entirely subsided. About nine o'clock we came to Grear's. After taking a little rest here, we set out next morning for brother Cox's, on Holstien River. I had trouble enough. Our route lay through the woods, and my pack-horse would neither follow, lead, nor drive, so fond was he of stopping to feed on the green herbage. I tried the lead, and he pulled back. I tied his head up, to prevent his grazing, and he ran back. The weather was excessively warm. I was much fatigued, and my temper not a little tried. Arriving at the river, I was at a loss what to do; but providentially a man came along who conducted me across. This has been an awful journey to me, and this a tiresome day; and now, after riding seventy-five miles, I have thirty-five more to General Russell's."

Such were the dangers and toils through which this holy man struggled to meet the little band of preachers scattered through those western wilds. Some of the incidents of this little Conference in Holstien are narrated by the venerable Thomas Ware in his brief memoir. He writes: "The first Conference in Holstien was held in 1788. As the road by which Bishop Asbury was to come, was infested with hostile savages, so that it could not be travelled except by considerable companies together, he was detained for a week after the time appointed to commence it. But we were not idle; and the Lord gave us many souls in the place where we assembled, among whom were General Russell and lady, the latter a sister of the illustrious Patrick Henry. I mention

those particularly, because they were the first fruits of our labors at this Conference. On the Sabbath we had a crowded audience; and Mr. Tunnell preached an excellent sermon, which produced a great effect. The sermon was followed by a number of powerful exhortations. When the meeting closed Mrs. Russell came to me and said, 'I thought I was a Christian; but, sir, I am not a Christain; I am the veriest sinner upon earth. I want you and Mr. Martin to come with Mr. Tunnell to our house, and pray for us, and tell us what we must do to be saved.' So we went and spent much of the afternoon in prayer, especially for Mrs. Russell. But she did not obtain deliverance.

"Being much exhausted, the preachers retired to a pleasant grove, near at hand to spend a short time. After we had retired, the General, seeing the agony of soul under which his poor wife was laboring, read to her, by the advice of his pious daughter, Mr. Fletcher's charming address to mourners, as contained in his Appeal. At length we heard the word 'Glory!' often repeated, accompanied with the clapping of hands. We hastened to the house, and found Mrs. Russell praising the Lord, and the General walking the floor and weeping bitterly, uttering at the same time this plaintive appeal to the Saviour of sinners: 'O Lord, thou didst bless my dear wife while thy poor servant was reading to her—hast thou not a blessing also for me?' At length he sat down quite exhausted.

"This scene was in a high degree interesting to us. To see the old soldier and statesman—the proud

oppressor of godliness, trembling, and earnestly enquiring what he must do to be saved, was an affecting sight. But the work ended not here. The conversion of Mrs. Russell, whose zeal, good sense, and amiableness of character were proverbial, together with the penitential grief so conspicuous in the General, made a deep impression on the minds of many: and numbers were brought in before the Conference ceased. The General rested not until he knew his adoption; and he continued a faithful member of the church, and an efficient member, after he became eligible for office, constantly adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour, unto the end of his life."

CHAPTER VIII.

Series of Conferences—Journey of Asbury and Coke—Prosperous state of the Churches—Revivals—Rev. S. G. Roszell—Extension of the work in Virginia—Size of a District—Quarterly Meetings—Establishment of "The Council"—Its powers—The first Meeting—Dissatisfaction—Abandonment of the plan—Conferences of 1790—John Tunnell—His labors and death—Enoch George—Daniel Hall—Asbury in Virginia—Rev. Thomas Scott's view of his character—Efforts to establish Sunday Schools—Conferences of 1791--2—Stith Mead—Sketch of his life—Conference in Greenbrier—Method of conducting business—Remarkable Conversion—Perilous journey of Asbury through the mountains.

FOR the whole work eleven Conferences were held in the spring of 1789. The series opened in Georgia on the 9th of March, and closed at New York on the 28th of May. These small assemblies were held at intervals of ten or twelve days, and frequently within fifty miles of each other. This gave rise to some dissatisfaction, but at that period the Bishop usually called as many Conferences as he thought proper, and held them at such times and places as were most convenient for the preachers and for himself as the General Superintendent. In Virginia two of these Conferences were held—one at Petersburg on the 18th of April, the other at Leesburg on the 28th of the same month.

In his northward journey Asbury was accompa-

nied by Dr. Coke, who reached the Continent in February from the West Indies. Some of the incidents of their tour have been preserved by Dr. Coke. Notwithstanding the privations and sufferings of a long and dangerous travel through wild, uncultivated regions, they found much to enliven the solitudes through which they passed. "They were occasionally interrupted by large congregations that assembled at stated places to wait their arrival. To these they preached the word of life, and much success seemed to crown their labors. The scenery, also, sometimes appeared romantic and highly picturesque. Extensive vistas, expanded waters, towering pines, the rustling of breezes, the flight of birds, and the startling of trembling fawns, all conspired to impart an exhilarating solemnity to their spirits, and to raise their thoughts from nature "up to nature's God." Part of their journey was illumined by the burning of an immense pine forest. "It was," says Dr. Coke, "the most astonishing illumination that I ever beheld. We seemed surrounded with extensive fires, and I question whether the King of France's stag hunt in his forest by night, which he has sometimes given to his nobility, would be more wonderful or entertaining to a philosophic eye. I have seen old rotten pine trees all on fire; the trunks and the branches, which looked like so many arms, were full of visible fire, and made a most grotesque appearance."

Of what was done at the Conferences in Virginia scarcely a trace remains. Asbury has not a word to guide us. From Dr. Coke we gather that the state

of religion was highly encouraging. "Many preachers were permitted to enter on the increasing work; and the storms of persecution, which had formerly raged with so much violence, were heard no more. Applause and approbation had succeeded to the frowns of hostility; and chariots and other carriages brought a crowd of genteel and attentive hearers to those spots which ferocious mobs had covered about two years prior to this time."

The members in Virginia were reported at 10,885 whites, and 2,487 blacks; the increase was a little above 2,000, though we have no guides to those fields, most highly favored with the outpourings of the Spirit. We find a few traces of the good work in Gloucester circuit preserved by Rev. Thomas Scott. "Our quarterly meeting was held at the house of Mrs. Chapman, situated in a place called Guinea. Rev. Stephen G. Roszell came with the presiding elder, Philip Bruce, and preached on Sunday. He was a noble looking man, but, I thought from his manner, too forward, and entertained too high an opinion of himself. After dinner, in the course of conversation, I pointed out several important mistakes he had made in his sermon, and pressed them upon him; at length he exclaimed, 'Young man, I'll fix you for this.' The evening passed off pleasantly, till the candles were lighted, and the congregation assembled. Mr. R. and myself were in a lively conversation up stairs, when the room door was suddenly opened by the Rev. Mr. Bruce, who said, 'Brother Scott, you must preach,' and instantly withdrew. I was startled as if by a clap of thunder. Mr. R. perceived my

confusion and embarrassment, and laughed. I instantly suspected that my appointment to preach had been procured by his application, and I felt something like irritation. I hesitated a few moments, not knowing what to do. I feared to disobey the peremptory order of my elder. In a few moments a certain passage of Scripture occurred to my mind, and I instantly went down stairs and commenced the meeting. My text was Isaiah iii: 10, 11. I spoke about thirty minutes, and returned to my room. Before I concluded, the power of God came down upon the congregation, and the floor was literally covered with mourners crying for mercy. Masters, mistresses, and their slaves were promiscuously strewed together on the floor. The work continued to a late hour, and several struggled into life. Neither before nor since did I ever pass such a night of anxiety and deep distress. During the whole time that I was speaking, it appeared to me that my mind was in a constant state of irritation. I had said nothing which to my mind was calculated to produce the effects, the evidences of which lay before me. The ideas which forced themselves upon me were, 'They are all hypocrites, you are a hypocrite, you were never called to minister in sacred things, your elder now discovers it, and you will be sent home on Monday morning.' This continued until I preached again the next day on as sudden a call from the elder as the one just mentioned, when the clouds broke, light came in, and I spoke with much feeling."

Mr. Roszell was a fearless leader among our early preachers; his labors were largely bestowed on Vir-

ginia in the earlier, as well as in the later years of his very useful life. He is described by Mr. Scott as a man of imposing personal appearance, with a clear commanding voice, a fine reasoner, powerful in theological disputation, and a "plain, sound, theoretical, experimental, practical preacher."

The work in Virginia was extended by the addition of two new circuits, Greensville and Botetourt.

Virginia supplied several preachers this year, whose names are cherished as among the most faithful of our early laborers. Few men have left a brighter record than Jesse Nicholson and Christopher S. Mooring; few have been more useful to the Church and more successful in all the work of the Christian ministry.

Among the number called from labor to rest, one was from Virginia. His record is brief, but expressive: Henry Bingham—a native of Virginia; four years a laborer in the vineyard; serious, faithful, zealous, humble and teachable; and during part of the last year more than commonly successful, and resigned in death."

For the first time the official title of "Presiding Elder" occurs this year in the Minutes. As a matter of curious interest to the reader, we give the number of circuits embraced in a single district seventy years ago. A glance at the map will show that to "make a round" once in three months over such a territory was no light work.

The "South District of Virginia" embraced the following circuits: Halifax, Mecklenburg, Bedford, Cumberland, Amelia, Brunswick, Sussex, Greensville, Bertie, Camden, Portsmouth, Williamsburg,

Hanover and Orange. The North District reached from the Alleghany Mountains to the Chesapeake Bay, embracing Rockingham, Alleghany, Berkeley, Fairfax, Lancaster and Gloucester; the counties not named were of course included in these circuits. Over these vast Districts the Presiding Elders passed every three months. How great the labors of those truly heroic men who planted Methodism in these lands!

With scanty fare and scanty pay, exposed to all dangers, to heat and cold, sleeping in the forest, or in huts before the fire, on a deer or bear skin bed, amid all these, and a thousand other privations, they pressed on after the lost sheep in the wilderness.

In this noble work the Presiding Elders led the way, and every preacher cheerfully followed. The Quarterly Meetings were occasions of great interest; they were almost always marked by signal displays of Divine power. The people gathered to them from a distance of forty or fifty miles, and returned to their homes refreshed and strengthened as from a "feast of fat things, of wines on the lees well refined."

The only intimations of the spiritual condition of the churches in Virginia during this year we glean from the meagre entries in Asbury's journal. In some places he felt cheered and encouraged, in others he was deeply grieved at the afflictions of Zion. Of Gloucester, through which he passed rapidly, he writes: "We had a few attentive people at Brother Bellamy's. O Gloucester! Gloucester! when will it be famous for religion!" At Chickahominy Church he preached, faithfully warning "sinners, Pharisees,

backsliders, hypocrites, and believers;" he thought all, "these characters were there, doubtless a goodly number in the large congregation which attended."

At Mabry's, in Brunswick, under the word "there was a remarkable quickening and manifestation of the Lord's power." He had a good meeting at Roanoke Chapel, and was rejoiced to find that the Society there had increased to more than a hundred souls. In the Northern Neck the signs were cheering. One of his "public and social meetings occupied six hours and a half." Many, both white and black, came through the rain to hear the word of life; the work of grace was deepened in many hearts, and several bore testimony to the pure love of God.

The year 1789 is noted in the history of American Methodism for the establishment of a new ecclesiastical body with large powers styled "The Council." The necessities of the Church gave birth to this singular Council. The Bishops clearly saw the inconvenience of summoning all the preachers scattered over the work to meet in one Conference. Hence their plan of holding small separate Conferences as a mere matter of convenience; but in these Conferences no action taken was binding, except ordination and appointing the preachers, unless ratified by them all. Such unanimity could hardly be expected under the most favorable circumstances. There was, therefore, danger of Methodism falling to pieces as an organization for the want of some central power to give direction to its energies and uniformity to its administrations.

As the best plan that could be devised, the Bishops, after mature reflection, recommended to the Confer-

ences the establishment of a representative body, to be composed of the wisest and best men of the Church, to meet at stated periods for the formation of all needful rules and regulations for the government of the Church in its various departments. The plan met with much opposition in some of the Conferences, but was finally adopted. The Council was to consist of "the Bishops and the Presiding Elders, provided the members who compose it be never fewer than nine." When organized they were clothed with "authority to mature every thing they might judge expedient." 1. To preserve the general union. 2. To render and preserve the external form of worship similar in all our Societies throughout the Continent. 3. To preserve the essentials of Methodist Doctrines and Discipline pure and uncorrupted. And lastly, they were authorized to mature every thing they may see necessary for the good of the Church, and for the promoting and improving our colleges and plans of education."

Singularly enough, the Conferences, after granting these extraordinary powers, almost completely neutralized them by the following proviso: "Provided, nevertheless, that nothing shall be received as the resolution of the Council, unless it be assented to unanimously by the Council; and nothing so assented to by the Council, shall be binding in any District till it has been agreed upon by a majority of the Conference which is held for that District." Thus the Council received its life, and its death wound, in the same hour. That body was hardly worth exist-

ence whose acts could be ignored by any little Conference of a dozen members.

A picture of the first Council and its doings has been preserved by Asbury He writes, under date of "Thursday, December 3: Our Council was seated, (at Baltimore), consisting of the following persons, viz: Richard Ivey, from Georgia; R. Ellis, South Carolina; E. Morris, North Carolina; Philip Bruce, North District of Virginia; James O'Kelly, South District of Virginia; Lemuel Green, Ohio; Nelson Reid, Western Shore of Maryland; Joseph Everett, Eastern Shore; John Dickens, Pennsylvania; J. O. Cromwell, Jersey; and Freeborn Garrettson, New York. All our business was done in love and unanimity. The concerns of the College were well attended to, as also the printing business. We formed some resolutions relative to economy and union, and others concerning the funds for the relief of our suffering preachers on the frontiers. We rose on the eve of Wednesday following. During our sitting we had preaching every night; and some few souls were stirred up, and others converted. The *prudence* of some had stilled the noisy ardour of our young people, and it was difficult to re-kindle the fire. I collected about twenty-eight pounds for the poor, suffering preachers in the West. We spent one day in speaking our own experiences, and giving an account of the progress and state of the work of God in our several Districts; a spirit of union pervades the whole body, producing blessed effects and fruits."

The Council met again in 1790, and "determined," says Jesse Lee, "to have another meeting two years

from that time. But their proceedings gave such dissatisfaction to our Connection in general, and to some of the travelling preachers in particular, that they were forced to abandon the plan." Thus, with scarcely a regret from any quarter, the Council passed to the shades.

Fourteen Conferences were held for 1790. Two of these were within the limits of Virginia. The first met at Lane's Chapel in Sussex county, on the 14th of June; the second at Leesburg, on the 26th of August. Asbury gives a more complete account of what was done at Lane's Chapel than is usual with him. "Our Conference began; all was peace until the Council was mentioned. The young men appeared to be entirely under the influence of the elders, and turned it out of doors. I was weary and felt but little freedom to speak on the subject. This business is to be explained to every preacher; and then it must be carried through all the Conferences twenty-four times, that is, through all the Conferences for two years. We had some little quickenings, but no great move among the people at our public preaching. Mr. Jarratt preached for us; friends at first are friends again at last. There were four elders, and seventeen deacons ordained; ten young men who offered to travel, besides those who remained on trial. The work of God does revive here, although not in the same degree it did two years ago. In the midst of all my labors and troubles I enjoy peace within."

James O'Kelly, himself a prominent member of the first Council, was now its most bitter opponent. His great influence with the younger Virginia preach-

ers brought the whole of them into line against the Council, and they summarily "turned it out of doors."

All we know of the Leesburg Conference, is given by Asbury with his usual brevity.

Wednesday, August 25: "Our Conference began at Leesburg, and we continued together until the Sabbath following, and had a happy time of peace and union."

The returns from the circuits in Virginia showed a membership of 12,826 whites, and 3,416 blacks; the increase was nearly 3,500. The work was enlarged by the addition of three new circuits, Surry and Stafford in the eastern, and Kanawha in the western part of the State.

Two faithful laborers had fallen during the year. James Conner, of Buckingham, closed his life in peace, after toiling two years and a half. His record is brief, but complete. "A pious, solid, understanding man. His gifts were improvable, and promised usefulness to the Church. In the midst of a blameless life he was suddenly taken away from labor and suffering, and blessed with confidence in his last moments."

"John Tunnell died of a consumption at the Sweet Springs in July, 1790." Such is the record in the Minutes followed by six lines in which we are told that he was in the active work thirteen years; "was a man of solid piety, great simplicity and godly sincerity; well known and much esteemed both by ministers and people."

Tunnell was a brave leader among those preachers who counted not their lives dear unto themselves. In

1787, while the seeds of disease were springing up within him, he volunteered to lead a little band of four into the wild and rugged country along the Holston River. There, amid savage beasts, and still more savage men, this holy man toiled for souls, nor toiled in vain. The seed of the gospel fell into good ground, and the Holston Conference now covers the field first broken by Whitaker, Tunnell, Ware and other faithful men. Foremost among them stood Tunnell; "a great preacher," says Jesse Lee; "a great saint," says Asbury. The Bishop was in the mountains when he died, and preached his funeral. "Few men," he writes, "as public ministers were better known, or more beloved. He was a simple-hearted, artless, childlike man; had a large fund of Scriptural knowledge, was a good historian, a sensible, imposing preacher, a most affectionate friend, and a great saint. He had been wasting and declining in strength and health, for eight years past."

Among those who were received on trial this year, in the Virginia Conference, we find the names of Enoch George and Daniel Hall, both of whom became eminent as Christian ministers. In Enoch George the Conference received a good and true man. For simplicity, power, and pathos in the pulpit, he was excelled by no man in his day. The Northern Neck of Virginia, so prolific of great men, was his birthplace.

His father, in the hope of improving his worldly interests, changed his home several times during the minority of his son, residing for brief periods in the counties of Lancaster, Sussex, Dinwiddie, and Bruns-

wick. The family were nominally religious, and connected with the Established Church. Either in Dinwiddie or Brunswick, young George had the privilege of sitting under the ministry of the Rev. Devereaux Jarratt. His mind was deeply impressed by the clear and searching sermons of this eminent man, and he soon became an earnest enquirer after truth. While in this hopeful state the family removed to a distant parish, where they were deprived of the ministrations of Mr. Jarratt. Surrounded in his new home by gay and thoughtless neighbors, he found his serious impressions wearing off; he became trifling and worldly in his feelings, and a boon companion of those who ridiculed serious and godly people. His career of folly was arrested by an exhortation from that "son of thunder," John Easter. His parents had gone to hear this venerable man, while he remained at home preparing bitter sarcasms against Methodist preachers and their modes of worship. On their return his first word against Methodists was met by a stern rebuke from his father: "Sir, let me never hear any thing of that nature escape your lips again." He was struck dumb by this reproof; he saw that his father had been deeply impressed by the truth, and he determined to hear the preacher for himself. The next day, on reaching the church, he found it crowded, but, with some difficulty, secured a seat. The sermon was preached by a stranger, followed by Easter in one of his powerful exhortations. The word came in the power of the Holy Ghost. Some fell from their seats prostrate on the floor, others kneeled in an agony of prayer, while

many ran from the house. Young George was astonished; one man came near falling on him; he attempted to leave the house, but his limbs were powerless.

At length he rose and fled from the place, resolving never again to visit a Methodist meeting. The next day he refused to go back, though urged by some of his young companions. His father interposed and said, "Go, my son." He obeyed and went; conviction seized his heart, and he fell down at the Cross, an humble penitent.

His struggle for deliverance was long and painful; he roamed the fields and woods, seeking pardon for his sins. One Sabbath, alone in the forest, he wrestled in prayer. While on his knees, the light broke on his darkness, his spirit seemed bathed in a sweet peace, and he felt that God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven and accepted him. He was not long idle. He took up the cross and held prayers in his father's family; he aided his teacher in conducting a revival in the school that he attended; and he was soon called to assist in the public prayer meetings. Thus God thrust him into the vineyard. His friends began to think he ought to preach; he shuddered at the idea; they urged him to exhort; he shrank even from this. They then induced the circuit preacher to consent to call him out after the sermon, and thus force him into the work. He heard of their plan, and although too conscientious to absent himself from the meeting, he hoped by going late and taking an obscure seat, to escape notice. The preacher, suspecting him to be present, though he did not see him, called out at

the close of his sermon: "Brother George, come up and exhort."

At this the poor youth was so alarmed that he slipped from his seat and sat on the floor, hoping to escape observation. But the inexorable preacher continued to call for him, until at length a friend went and took him by the hand and led him to the pulpit. He then ventured to make his first exhortation.

Some time after this he was urged by a preacher, who wished to locate, to take his place on the circuit, till the close of the year. He consented, and began his itinerant life as the colleague of Philip Cox, a most excellent and useful man. One day, while riding along together, they met Bishop Asbury; Cox presented George to the Bishop, saying: "I have brought you a boy, and if you have anything for him to do, you may set him to work." "Bishop Asbury," says George, "looked at me for sometime; at length calling me to him, he laid my head upon his knee, and stroking my face with his hand, he said: 'Why, he is a beardless boy, and can do nothing.' I then thought my travelling was at an end. The next day Asbury sent him to a circuit, and Enoch George boldly rode forward in the path of duty from which he never swerved for a single moment.

He was well fitted, in mind and body, for the arduous work of the ministry. His person was large and noble, indicating great strength and great power of endurance. His face was the index of his mind, and impressed the beholder with an idea of mental energy. There was a happy adaptation between his physical and

mental ability. Energy is the word that most accurately describes him. "He was every where the thinking, active agent, rather than the sequestered plodding theorist." He thought rapidly and accurately, decided promptly and firmly, and allowed o business to hang on his hands. The propelling power of his mind was felt in every department of the Church through which he moved. With him "nothing was done while anything remained to be done." He was a preacher of rare ability. His voice was powerful, but not harsh, under perfect control, and seemed peculiarly fitted for the expression of pathetic thoughts. His style, as described by one who had often heard him, "was a mixture of the sublime and the pathetic and might be considered, alternately, a very good specimen of each, in purely extemporaneous productions. To the rules of Rhetoric, or the arts of studied eloquence, he paid little regard; but if the true eloquence of the pulpit be, as Blair defines it, "to make an impression on the people—to strike and seize their hearts'—he was a master, and, in comparison with thousands who claim to be such, more than a master. No man ever succeeded more uniformly in moving his congregation to tears, and, sometimes even to trembling and loud cries, than did Bishop George."

In his flights of eloquence, he often carried the whole congregation "away as with a flood." He used to say, "It is the grammatical eloquence of the Holy Ghost that deeply, lastingly, and powerfully effects the hearts of men." "The unction that attended his word," says Wilbur Fisk, "was not merely like

the consecrating oil that ran down Aaron's beard, but it was like the anointing spirit that penetrates the heart. He preached with his soul full of glory." The secret of his extraordinary power in the pulpit is found in his close communion with God in the closet. Says one who knew him well: "He certainly exceeded any person I ever knew in private prayer. He would wrap his cloak around him, and no matter how cold, he would continue over half an hour praying, groaning, wrestling, agonizing; thus he had intimate communion with God."

As a Bishop he presided in the Conferences with dignity, impartiality, and faithfulness. He is the only Bishop of the Church of whom no portrait exists. He never could be induced to sit to an artist. He used to say: "If any painter ever gets my likeness to exhibit, he shall steal it, or catch it flying." He had an unconquerable aversion to being catechized by curious strangers, as the following anecdote will attest:

Riding through New England in company with a preacher, "he espied," says the narrator, "a farmer on his horse near the road-side. The farmer was in conversation with a neighbor and did not see us until our carriage was nearly opposite to him.

'Stop," said the Bishop to me, "stop, Bub, and let me get out, for I perceive that old body is preparing to fire a platoon of questions at me, which I can never answer.'

I of course complied with his request, and the Bishop was off at double-quick step. The farmer

was off also, belaboring his old nag's sides with his boot-heels, most unmercifully.

The Bishop, looking over his shoulder as he ran, perceived the increasing speed of his pursuer, and quickened his pace, but all to no purpose; his tormentor was close on his track, and would soon open his battery of questions. Seeing a dense thicket near at hand, the Bishop darted into it and was soon beyond the reach of pursuit. The farmer muttering his disappointment rode slowly along, and not till he was out of sight would the Bishop leave his place of concealment. As he emerged from the thicket he exclaimed to his companion, who had come up with the carriage:

"Did I not tell you he was preparing to catechise me? It is very annoying to me, as I cannot answer their principal questions, which generally are these:

First, 'where do you live when you are at home?'

Now the truth is, I cannot answer this question, for I have no home. The second is:

'How old are you?'

This I cannot answer as the family records were destroyed at the commencement of the Revolutionary war. Therefore, as I cannot answer their principal questions, neither can I others, and I do not wish to be perplexed by a constant catechetical course; and I will *run at any time*, if I can only avoid such tormenters."

Daniel Hall was a noble specimen of a man and a minister. He was born in Gloucester county. At the early age of eighteen, he was a preacher. His person, of medium height, was handsome and well-

formed. In his dress he was a pattern of neatness; not a speck of dust could be found on his well-brushed suit, while his boots always shone with the highest polish. He stood and walked perfectly erect. His features were fine and regular, with a florid complexion and deep blue eyes. As a companion, he was exceedingly agreeable, possessing a large fund of anecdotes and incidents which he related in the social circle, with fine effect. His benevolent feelings were strongly developed, and he was diligent in seeking out the poor, and ministering to their wants. As a preacher, he stood in the first-class. He possessed a sound judgment, was an excellent disciplinarian and as a Presiding Elder had no superior in the Church. No man contributed more to the establishment of Methodism in Virginia than Daniel Hall. He studied medicine after he became a preacher, and hence his title, Dr. Hall. He spoke but seldom in the Conferences, but when he did, his words were weighty, and he was heard with profound respect. There was a vein of natural eccentricity running through his character, and the following anecdote illustrative of this remark has been furnished by the Rev. Arthur Cooper, who for many years was his intimate friend.

"While stationed at Norfolk he was sometimes invited to preach at Washington Point. One very warm day he went over to an appointment, accompanied by Mr. Cooper. A fine congregation was in waiting.

Among those who succeeded in crowding into the house was a gentleman who was extremely fond of singing, though not finely gifted in that line, and

who generally assumed the duty of pitching the tune the moment the preacher gave out the lines. The Doctor read a hymn in short measure, which the would be chorister attempted to sing in common measure. It was hard work, but by slurs and other methods known only to himself, he managed to go on with it. Dr. Hall gave out the hymn by lines to the end. At the close he paused a moment, and then looking at the singer, said: "Now, sir, you have sung that whole hymn wrong; now go over it again, and sing it right; you know better." And he made the poor fellow perform the whole piece to a suitable tune, while the sweat rolled in streams from his face. As they walked back home, Mr. C. asked him how he could find it in his heart to impose such a task on the man. He replied: "He knew he was doing wrong, sir, and I wished to make him do right."

The following anecdote has been related of Bishop Asbury, Dr. Hall, and Nicholas Snethen. They were on their way from Charleston, South Carolina, to Virginia. Having travelled a long distance without stopping to rest or eat, Hall and Snethen became very hungry, and modestly proposed to "Father," as the early preachers called the Bishop, that they should halt beneath an inviting shade near a fine spring, and refresh themselves with a nice lunch that some thoughtful sister had placed in their saddle-bags.

"Pooh! pooh!" said the Bishop, "come along, come along, you are always thinking of filling your bread-bags; that is the reason you preach no better than you do;" and riding on at a brisk pace he left

them in the rear. They concluded that if "Father" could do without eating, they could not, so dismounting, they fell to work on the lunch. While thus engaged, they were startled by the sound of horses' feet, and looking up they saw the Bishop coming back at full speed, setting perfectly erect on his horse and holding him in with all his might.

Snethen exclaimed as they both sprang to their feet, "look at Father's horse, he is running away with him."

Having reached his companions the runaway horse stopped. "Now see what you have done," said the Bishop almost out of breath, "You have been the cause of all this."

Then wheeling his horse he rode rapidly away. They put up their lunch and hurried after him, amusing themselves at the idea of having made the Bishop race back nearly a mile.

For fifty years Dr. Hall filled his place in the itinerant ranks with honor and usefulness to the Church of his early choice, and went down to his grave full of years as a shock of corn fully ripe, and ready for the garner of heaven.

In his annual tour this year Asbury made a journey through the sea-board counties of Virginia and North Carolina. The following striking picture of this true successor of the Apostles is from the pen of Rev. Thomas Scott, whom we have already introduced to the reader:

"Toward the close of the winter of 1790, about nine o'clock of a dark night, Bishop Asbury arrived at the house of Mr. Flemming, in Gloucester county,

where I then was. Till the roads through the States became so much improved that he could ride in a carriage, he constantly travelled with two horses, one he rode, the other carried his baggage. His baggage-horse would follow him any where, like a dog. On the night of his arrival at Mr. Flemming's it was so dark through the pine woods that the Bishop could not see which way to go, and he left it to his horse that had often travelled that way before.

He was in fine spirits. I had often seen him and heard him preach, but that was the first time in which we had ever been brought into immediate union and fellowship with each other. He was now 44 years of age, and about five feet, eight inches in height. His bones were large, but not his muscles. His voice was deep toned, sonorous and clear. His articulation and emphasis were very distinct, and his words were always appropriate. His sermons resembled the lessons of an intellectual parent giving instruction to the children whom he tenderly loved. His features were distinctly marked, and his intellectual organs were well balanced and finely developed. His hair and complexion, when he was young, were light, and his eye-lashes uncommonly long. No one could look upon his countenance without feeling that he was in the presence of a great man. His very look inspired awe, veneration nd respect. His general appearance was that of a person born to rule. He was an excellent judge of the character, talents and qualifications of men for particular stations. When presiding in Conferences, unless when compelled to speak, he sat with his eyes apparently closed; but

those who attentively noticed his countenance never failed to see that his eyes were not closely shut, but were in constant motion, looking through his long eye-lashes, inspecting the countenances of the different members of the Conference, so as to form a correct estimate of each. His appeals to the preachers, when it became necessary for missionaries to be sent to the wilds of the West, were irresistible. When he found it necessary to relax the gravity of his countenance he would make himself as pleasant and playful as a child.

"I once had the happiness of spending parts of two days in company with him and the Rev. Richard Whatcoat, afterward Bishop. When he wanted a little relaxation from his studies, he would teaze Whatcoat for hours together, particularly in the morning, before his old friend, whom he sincerely loved and venerated, got out of bed."

This tour of Asbury, to which allusion is made in the above extract, was a severe one. It was midwinter, and the weather distressingly cold. He suffered much in crossing the wide rivers in open ferry-boats exposed to the piercing winds, yet in the midst of all, his mind was kept in peace. Reaching a friendly house after a ride of twenty-five miles, he writes: "I found myself much chilled by my ride. My soul has been kept in peace and almost in constant prayer. I wish to feel so placid as not to have any acid in my temper, nor a frown or wrinkle on my brow; to bear all things, to do all things, suffer all things, from the ignorance or weakness of the children of God, or wickedness of the sons and daughters

of Satan. I think my soul momently pants after more of God."

Asbury was peculiarly gifted, as all his contemporaries testify, in discerning character, and no one enjoyed more highly the company of refined and cultivated Christians. In this tour he visited Councillor Carter, a prominent citizen of the Northern Neck. Of Mr. Carter, he writes: "he has the manners of a gentleman, the attainments of a scholar, and the experience of a Christian." Brief but expressive eulogy.

An effort was made this year to establish Sunday Schools throughout the Connection. Before stating the Conference action on the subject, we yield to an inclination to present the reader a brief sketch of this important institution.

As is well known, to Robert Raikes, a benevolent citizen of Gloucester, England, belongs the honor of founding Sunday Schools. He gives the following account of his early labors in this cause:

"The utility of an establishment of this kind was first suggested by a group of little miserable wretches whom I observed one day in the street, where many people employed in the pin factory reside. I was expressing my concern to one at their forlorn and neglected state, and was told that if I were to pass through that street on Sunday, it would shock me indeed to see the crowds of children who were spending the sacred day in noise and riot. I immediately determined to make some little effort to remedy this evil. Having found four persons who were accustomed to instruct children in reading, I engaged to pay the

sum they required for receiving and instructing such children as I might send to them every Sunday.

"The children were to come soon after ten o'clock in the morning and stay till twelve. They were then to go home and return at one, and after reading a lesson, they were to be conducted to church. After church they were to be employed in repeating catechism till half-past five, and then to be dismissed, with an injunction to go home without making a noise, and by no means to play in the streets.

"Many of the parents said they were too poor to clothe them in fit garb to appear at the school, but we told them if they could appear on the street they might come to the school; all we required was clean faces, clean hands, and the hair combed. In all other respects they were to come as their circumstances would admit. A manufacturer was asked if he saw any change in the children.

"'Sir,' said he, 'the change could not have been more extraordinary had they been transformed from the shape of wolves and tigers to that of men.'

"In tempers, disposition, and manners they could hardly be said to differ from the brute creation, but since the establishment of the Sunday Schools, they have shown that they are not the abject creatures they were before."

No sooner had Wesley learned of this successful experiment at Gloucester, than he determined at once to introduce Sunday Schools into his Societies. He earnestly exhorted the Methodists to imitate the example of Mr. Raikes. They responded to his appeals, and in the year 1785, "hard-working men and

women began to instruct their neighbor's children, and go with them to the house of God on the Lord's day, without being hired for the purpose."

Wesley, therefore, was the first to introduce gratuitous instruction into the system, and to give religious instruction the chief place in all the schools under his care.

One of his largest and most flourishing schools at Bolton, is thus described in his journal:

"We went on to Bolton; about there I met between nine hundred and a thousand of the children belonging to our Sunday Schools. I never saw such a sight before. They were all exactly clean, as well as plain in their apparel. All were serious and well-behaved. Many, both boys and girls, had as beautiful faces as, I believe England or Europe can afford. When they all sung together, and none of them out of tune, the melody was beyond that of any theatre; and, what is best of all, many of them truly fear God, and some rejoice in his salvation. These are a pattern to the town. Their usual diversion is to visit the poor that are sick, (sometimes six, or eight, or ten together,) to exhort, comfort and pray with them. Frequently ten or more of them get together to sing and pray for themselves; sometimes thirty or forty; and are so earnestly engaged, alternately singing, praying and crying, that they know not how to part."

This school, by far the largest in England, was instructed by eighty teachers, all of whom "offered their services willingly, without any pecuniary fee or reward."

From the year 1785, wherever Methodist missionaries have been sent they have labored to establish Sunday Schools on the principle of gratuitous instruction. It was not till about the close of the last century that other Churches seemed to feel the necessity of conducting their Sunday Schools on the same principle.

It has been stated on good authority that "the Sunday School Society formed in England in 1785, expended during the first fifteen years nearly five thousand pounds sterling in hiring teachers, our people (Methodists) only refusing to receive compensation, although in connection with that Society."

The impulse given this noble cause in England was soon felt in America. Asbury, the Wesley of the New World, was the first to open a Sunday School in Hanover county, Virginia. This school was taught in the house of Thomas Crenshaw, one of the first members of our Church in that section of the State. The pious labors of the pioneer teachers in this school were crowned of God in the conversion of a number of the scholars, among whom was a colored boy, John Charlson, who afterward became a local preacher and labored with zeal and success for more than forty years. Other schools were probably established in different sections of the work, but of this no positive information, so far as we know, remains on record.

The subject came before the Conferences of 1790, and their action is thus given in Jesse Lee's history:

"What can be done in order to instruct poor children (white and black) to read?"

"Let us labor, as the heart and soul of one man to

establish Sunday Schools, in or near the place of public worship. Let persons be appointed by the Bishops, Elders, Deacons, or Preachers, to teach (gratis) all that will attend, and have a capacity to learn; from six o'clock in the morning till ten; and from two o'clock in the afternoon till six; where it does not interfere with public worship. The Council shall compile a proper school book to teach them learning and piety."

Under this action, Sunday Schools were established in many places, and for some time cheering signs appeared of success in this new field of Christian enterprise. But unhappily for the Church and the children committed to her care, apathy took the place of zeal; in some places the schools were neglected, in others the ardor of the teachers was damped by persecution, and within a few years this interesting work was altogether abandoned. Every lover of Sunday Schools must lament that the Church gave up such a work, instead of pushing it forward with all her energy and with all the means at her command.

Thirteen Conferences were held for the year 1791; three of these met in Virginia. The first at Petersburg, April 20th; the second in Hanover, on the 26th; the third at Alexandria, May 2nd. These were small bodies held for the convenience of the preachers on the circuits nearest to the places mentioned. Asbury barely refers to them. Of the first he says: "The business of our Conference was brought on in peace; and there was a blessing attended our speaking, in our experiences, and in prayer." Of that in Hanover, he says: "We sat at

B. Clayton's, and were amply provided for; we hastened our business." Of the Alexandria Conference there is not a syllable. Dr. Coke was present at all these Conferences, in company with Asbury; at Alexandria he received certain intelligence of the death of Wesley, and hastened northward to find a passage to England.

The membership in Virginia was reported at 13,376 whites, and 3,827 blacks; the increase was not quite 1000. No new circuit was added within the limits of the State. Death had spared all the laborers in the Virginia field.

The Conference year was shortened by several months, by Asbury returning on his southern tour early in December. Under date of the seventh of this month, he writes: "A day to be remembered. We stopped once in forty-three miles. When we reached Oxen Hill Ferry, opposite Alexandria, I was nearly frozen, being hardly able to walk or talk. We crossed the Potomac in an open boat on whose icy bottom the horses with difficulty kept their feet; and still worse it would have been, had I not thoughtfully called for some straw to strew beneath them; we had five of them on board, and the waves were high."

On Wednesday, the 14th, Conference met at "Bro. Dickenson's, in Caroline county; all was peace and love. We had searching work with speaking experience, and in examining the young men who offered as candidates for the ministry." This Conference opened on Wednesday evening, and closed on Friday morning "after fasting and prayer." Asbury passed

on through Richmond, Manchester and Petersburg, to Lane's Chapel in Sussex county, where, on Friday, December 23d, our Conference began and ended in peace."

It appears strange to us to read of a Conference opening and closing the same day; but it must be remembered that at many of these meetings little more was done than to admit candidates on trial, receive the returns of members, examine the characters of the preachers, and re-appoint them to the work, all of which was often done by the Bishop in a few hours, there being usually not more than fifteen or twenty preachers in attendance.

For 1792 seventeen Conferences, were held, beginning, as we have seen, in Virginia, in December, 1791, and extending southward during the winter, then turning northward, and ending at Albany, New York, in August, 1792. In the Spring, on his return from the south, Asbury held two Conferences in the western part of the State; one in the Holston country, May the fifteenth; the other in Greenbrier county, on the 22nd of the same month; making four Conferences held in Virginia during the Conference year.

The membership in the State was reported at 14,099 whites, and 3,923 blacks. No new circuits were added. No death had occurred among the preachers. several retired from the intinerant to the local ranks; among the most prominent of these, were John Easter and Lewis Chastain, men of great purity, great power, and great success, as ministers of Christ. Among the number received on trial in the Virginia

Conference the name of Stith Mead deserves honorable mention. He was born in Bedford county, Virginia, September, 26th, 1767. His father, Colonel William Mead, was a farmer of considerable wealth, and served with distinction in the Revolutionary war. His parents were members of the Protestant Episcopal Church, his father holding the office of vestryman. He was religiously impressed at an early age, and although taken to Church regularly, found but little encouragement for his pious inclinations. What were called "civil entertainments" were indulged in as eagerly by church people as by the openly wicked.

Dancing, card-playing, fox-hunting, horse-racing, chicken-fighting, running, jumping, and wrestling formed the staple of these "entertainments."

In all of these save card-playing, young Mead became a proficient; this he regarded as a "detestable sport" and resolved never to acquaint himself with it. His youthful mind was deeply impressed by the religious conversation of his father's servants. For hours he would sit among them in their cabins at night, and listen to their rude talk about "Heaven and hell," evil spirits and the various punishments that would be inflicted on people guilty of such and such crimes.

From these scenes he would creep off to bed where the impressions were deepened by terrible dreams. In this state of mind he resolved to lead a new life, at least a moral one. He broke off from many evil practices, and at times "felt elated at the idea of going to heaven, and that he was not as bad as others in the world."

In his eighteenth year, his father having previously removed to Georgia, he was put to school at Augusta. Here his religious exercises continued with increasing distress of mind. Hearing that one of the teachers in the school had studied divinity, he applied to him for instruction. He was advised by the teacher to pray. The next day he committed to memory a form of prayer which he found in a spelling book. In his room he got upon his knees for three nights successively and repeated his form of prayer. "This," he says, "was the first time of my getting on my knees to pray from a conviction of mind that I was not ready to die." These good signs, however, soon passed away, and he again became careless about his soul. In 1789, when about twenty-two years of age, he came to Virginia on business. He reached Bedford in the midst of a great revival. Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians shared alike in the gracious outpourings of the Spirit.

He attended the meetings, but his heart was full of pride and vanity, and he set himself against the work of the Lord. At length conviction fastened upon his soul. He struggled against it, but to no purpose. The arrows of the Almighty stuck fast in him. The preachers in the circuit were Richard Pope, Christopher S. Mooring, assisted by John Ayers, for many years a useful and highly esteemed local preacher. Mead attended one of their meetings, and thus describes his feelings under the appeals addressed to him by these men of God:

"I felt hard under Ayers, a slight impression under Mooring, and under Pope the power of God came

upon me, and cast me out of the chair on the floor. I was like the man in the gospel, torn by the foul spirit; the burden of my sins was so great, and I had so plain a discovery of my lost and undone state, that if my next step was to have been in hell, I do not suppose more horrid shrieks and doleful cries could have been uttered." He did not here find peace. He thus describes his exercises at another meeting. The preacher was Pope; the word was like a two-edged sword: "I fell among the slain, and they were many; on my first recollection, I found myself on my back on the floor, groaning for deliverance. I was carried out of the house by some friendly hands, and laid under the shade of a tree, the house being so crowded that the people trod one upon another." Soon after this he found peace, and gave himself wholly to the work of God.

Methodism has had few laborers more faithful and efficient than Stith Mead. Without being a great, he was always a successful preacher. His love for Christ was ardent, his zeal knew no bounds, his faith was strong and active, his power in prayer was remarkable. Seven years he labored in the hardest fields in Virginia. He was then transferred to the South, and stationed at Augusta. Here in the face of great difficulties he organized a Society, and finally succeeded in building a house of worship. His account of the state of religion in Augusta, when he arrived there, cannot fail to interest the reader. In a letter to Bishop Asbury he says:

"I lament to say that this city, though the metropolis of Georgia, is the seat and nursery of Infidelity,

Atheism, Deism, Materialism, Fatalism, Diabolism, &c. The apostate, B. A., (Beverly Allen) and others have done great injury to the cause of Methodism. In a census of about 4,000 souls in the city I know of none who knew their right hand from their left in religion." He could find no place to board, even among his own kindred, many of whom had removed from Virginia and settled in and near the city. In this dilemma he determined to form a two weeks' circuit and spend one week in Georgia and one in South Carolina, the Savannah River exactly dividing his little field. He was allowed to preach in the Protestant Episcopal Church, but his plain and searching sermon so offended many of his hearers, that on the following Sabbath they refused to permit the church-bell to be rung for service.

His most violent opponents having threatened to pull him out of the pulpit, and to impale him on a stake and carry him out of town, he deemed it prudent to withdraw from the church altogether. He found a refuge in the house of Mr. Ebenezer Doughty. Here he preached and formed a class of six persons. This was the origin of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Augusta.

Having labored two years in this field, he was appointed Presiding Elder of the Georgia District. In this vast Territory he preached with great success. In conjunction with Hope Hull, Nicholas Snethen, and other men of the same stamp, he held many camp-meetings, at which thousands were converted, and the foundation of Methodism in Georgia firmly laid. After spending several years in the South, he

returned to the Virginia Conference, and for a long period toiled in every department of the itinerancy with unusual success. Like many who have given the strength of their days to the Church, this good and useful man became the victim of misfortune in the latter part of his life, and with a large family on his hands felt keenly the pinchings of poverty. But his faith in God never failed him, his love for Christ and his cause never grew cold; to the last he labored for souls, and joyfully received the summons to cease from toil and enter into rest. His acquaintance with Asbury, Coke and Whatcoat was intimate, and among his manuscripts are many letters from these and other leading men in the Church, showing how highly he was esteemed and loved as a fellow-laborer. He left a voluminous journal, containing much valuable information in regard to the progress of Methodism in Virginia and the Southern States. The labors of this venerable man will often come under review in the course of our narrative. There was no place where he was unwilling to toil for souls, and in no place did he ever toil without seeing the fruit of his labor. Under his ministry many were converted who became ornaments to the Church, and not a few were known in after years as brilliant and successful preachers. This brief tribute is due to the memory of one of the fathers of our Israel, who, while he lived, was a burning and a shining light, and who now rests amid the blessed in heaven.

Fortunately, we are able to give the reader a picture of one of our early Conferences from the journal of Stith Mead. It is the earliest and fullest ac-

count of Conference proceedings in detail that we have been able to find :

"Monday, 21st of May, 1792. We rode over Peter's Mountain by the Sweet Springs, to Brother Edward Keenan's at Rehoboth Chapel, Sinks of Greenbrier county, where I was glad to meet with the bishop, Rev. Francis Asbury ; Hope Hull, Philip Cox, Jeremiah Abel, elders; Salathiel Weeks, John Lindsey, Bennett Maxey, and John Metcalf, deacons. John Kobler, remaining on trial, was received into connexion and ordained a deacon. James Ward and Stith Mead admitted on trial as probationers. Rev. Samuel Mitchell, local preacher, ordained deacon ; Jeremiah Abel located. The above named preachers were all that composed and had business with the present Annual Conference. Bennett Maxey and John Kobler, by requests of the Bishop, related to the Conference their religious experience, and then the Conference adjourned until Tuesday at 8 o'clock, A. M., at which time J. Kobler, Geo. Martin, S. Mead were examined by the Bishop before the Conference, 1st, of our debts, 2dly, of our faith in Christ, 3dly, of our pursuits after holiness. The Bishop preached in the Chapel, which was near, at the usual hour, from Deut. v: 27, "Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say ; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear it and do it." Brother Hope Hull preached from 1 Cor. i: 23, "But we preach Christ crucified."

This afternoon I was requested by the Bishop to

relate to the Conference my religious experience, which I accordingly did.

The appointments or stations were received from the Bishop this evening as follows: No presiding elder. Holston circuit, Salathiel Weeks, James Ward; Botetourt circuit, Bennett Maxey, Stith Mead; Bedford circuit, John Metcalf, George Martin; Greenbrier circuit, John Kobler; Cow Pasture circuit, John Lindsey.

Wednesday, 23rd. When met in Conference, we were all examined by the Bishop as to our Confession of Faith and orthodoxy of doctrine, agreeably to the economy of Wesleyan Methodism. On a close examination it was discovered that two of the preachers composing the present session of Conference, namely, John Lindsey and George Martin, coming from the district where the Rev. James O'Kelly was the presiding elder, had imbibed heterodox opinions from him tending to Unitarianism. All the Conference were now requested by Bishop Asbury to bring forward all the Scripture texts they could recollect to prove the personality of the Trinity, and particularly that of the Holy Ghost; at which time these two preachers recanted their errors in doctrine, and were continued in Methodist fellowship. Bishop Asbury preached at the usual hour, Titus ii: 1, "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine." Rev. Hope Hull preached after the Bishop from 1 John iv: 17, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of Judgment, because as he is so are we in this world." A moving, melting time occurred during the sequel of this dis-

course; the holy Sacrament was administered; God manifested himself in his Spirit's power, the doors were opened, sinners came in, and there was a great shaking among the dry bones. Such a time, as I suppose, was never seen and experienced at this place before; ten souls were converted and many sinners cut to the heart. The lively exercises continued until near sundown.

Thursday, 24th. John Lindsey, Salathiel Weeks, and Bennett Maxey were ordained elders; John Kobler and Samuel Mitchell were ordained deacons. This is a rough, uncultivated country in soil, ways, and manners; the Conference was held in a log-body cabin-house, the residence of Brother G. Keenan, of Irish national descent. Our accommodation was the best in this part of the world.

"The Conference broke about ten o'clock; we took leave of each other, and departed to our respective circuits." We have preferred to give the account of this Conference literally from the journal.

It may be taken as a fair type of most of the Conferences held at that period. We see how closely the early preachers watched over each other in Christian experience and in doctrine. That is a deeply interesting scene in which the whole Conference comes forward with Scriptural proof to convince two beloved brethren who had been seduced from the true faith by a zealous but wrong-headed presiding elder; and then the sermons of Asbury and Hull immediately following, were admirably adapted to confirm and admonish these two brethren, who had flung away their errors, and again firmly laid hold on

the truth as it is in Jesus. God set the seal of his approval to the work of this little Conference, by the gracious revival in the midst of which it closed. Each man went to his field of toil with the pure flame of love burning in his soul, and the rugged region embraced in the Greenbrier Conference felt the refreshing showers of grace.

On the Botetourt circuit, under the labors of Maxey and Mead, more than three hundred were added to the Church. The scenes which sometimes occurred at the meetings, held in little log-churches, or in the cabins of the settlers, were of the most exciting character. The wonderful works of God were seen by saints and sinners. The most violent opposers of religion were often smitten to the ground and forced to confess their sins and cry for mercy.

During the progress of a gracious revival at the house of a pious member of the Church, his brother, a furious opposer of all religion, came to the place, swearing that he would beat the preacher, and break up the meeting.

Under the sermon, "he was struck with the power of God," the use of his limbs was entirely lost, and he lay roaring in the anguish of his soul. He began to gnash his teeth, and seemed to be really possessed by the Devil He was placed on a bed in the house, and the preacher, S. Mead, engaged in a prayer for him. When the prayer was over he lay apparently helpless on the bed; his face wore a strange expression; his look was fearful; for the space of a minute he gazed at the preacher in silence, then suddenly made a grasp at his throat. The blow was warded

off, when he fell back and exclaimed: "That is what the devil sent me here for to-day; now I am paid for it." He struck his brother violently several times as he held him in the bed, insisting that he loved his brother too well to hurt him if he could help it. He would make attempts to leap through the window; sometimes he could scarcely move a limb, and at other times, six strong men could hardly hold him in the bed. He would exclaim aloud: "I am going to hell this moment, this moment I am going to hell. O, that I should ever raise children that should say their father is gone to hell!" His cries of anguish could be heard at a great distance.

Thus he lay till the close of the day; at nightfall his friends took him to the door quite helpless and bathed his hands and face. Many became alarmed, thinking he was near death. Through the night he lay, with intervals of rest and fury. The presence of the preacher whom he had come to punish seemed to increase his torments, and he withdrew altogether from the room. He attempted to bite the watchers by his bedside; he pulled a bandage from his head, and tore it in pieces with his teeth. Thus was he tormented by the foul fiend through the entire night. As the day broke, the light of grace broke on his benighted soul; the demon that seemed really to possess him was rebuked and cast out, and he rose, "clothed and in his right mind." He soon after received a clear manifestation of the pardon of his sins. He was the means of convincing many of his neighbors, his wife was soon converted, a society was formed at his house, and he was appointed "class

leader for God, as he had been ring leader for Satan." Thus God wrought in power amid the rugged mountains of Western Virginia, and many noble trophies of the cross were gathered from a population in a high degree rude and uncultivated. Methodism took firm root in a soil broken in many places for the first time by her zealous laborers, and has ever since borne rich and abundant fruits.

The trials and sufferings cheerfully endured by our preachers in the West, prove their genuine heroism. Asbury was ever in the van as the great leader of our Israel. He thus narrates his perils in coming through the wilderness from Kentucky to Virginia:

"An alarm was spreading of a depredation committed by the Indians on the east and west frontiers of the settlement. In the former, report says one man was killed. In the latter, many men, with women and children. Every thing is in motion. There having been so many about me at Conference, my rest was much broken. I hoped now to regain it, and get refreshed before I set out to return through the wilderness; but the continual arrival of people until midnight, the barking of dogs, and other annoyances prevented.

Next night we reached the Crab Orchard, where thirty or forty people were compelled to crowd into one mean house. We could get no more rest here than we did in the wilderness. We came the old way by Scagg's Creek and Rock Castle, supposing it to be safer, as it was a road less frequented and therefore less liable to be waylaid by the savages. My body by this time is well tired. I had a violent fever and

pain in the head, such as I had not lately felt. I stretched myself on the cold ground, and borrowing clothes to keep me warm, by the mercy of God I slept four or five hours. Next morning we set off early and passed beyond Richland Creek. Here we were in danger, if anywhere. I could have slept, but was afraid. Seeing the drowsiness of the company, I walked the encampment, and watched the sentries the whole night. Early next morning we made our way to Robinson's Station. We had the best company I ever met with—thirty-six good travellers and a few warriors; but we had a pack-horse, some old men, and two tired horses—these were not the best part." Reaching a place of safety he writes: "Rest poor house of clay from such exertions! Return, O, my soul to thy rest!"

In these long and dangerous journeys he deplored the loss of strict communion with God. This, he says, was occasioned by "constant riding, change of place, company, and sometimes disagreeable company, loss of sleep, and the difficulties of clambering over rocks and mountains, and journeying at the rate of seven or eight hundred miles per month, and sometimes forty or fifty miles a day."

Through all this work he dragged a body weak and sickly, but animated by a spirit as pure and heroic as heaven ever gave to mortal man. And yet this man was the victim of calumny; the shafts of his enemies, keen and poisoned, reached even the eminence on which he stood; but his armor was impenetrable; they fell harmless at his feet

CHAPTER IX.

First schism in America Methodism—James O'Kelly—His success as a preacher—His influence in Virginia—Opposition to "The Council"—Assails Asbury—General Conference of 1792—O'Kelly proposes an amendment to the rules—A heated discussion—The amendment fails—O'Kelly retires from the body—Returns to Virginia and raises a party—Formally withdraws from the Church—"Republican Methodists"—Painful results of the schism—O'Kelly changes the name of his Church—New parties—Causes of failure—Fierce attacks on Asbury—Reaction—Meeting of Asbury and O'Kelly—Death of O'Kelly—Conferences of 1793—Methodism in Western Virginia—Edward and Samuel Mitchell—Conferences of 1794—Pastoral Address—Discontent in the churches—Conferences of 1795—Heavy decrease in members---Conference of 1796---Happy influence of the session---Loss of preachers---Reuben Ellis---Richard Joy---Stephen Davis---Asbury in the wilderness---Thrilling narrative.

DOWN to the year 1792 the American Methodist Church had successfully resisted external assaults and internal dissensions. The question of ordinances, and that of slavery, had agitated, without severing the Church. From this year the first serious rupture, known as the O'Kellyan Schism, must be dated. James O'Kelly, the leader in this movement, had long been a prominent and popular travelling preacher. His name appears on the Minutes as early as 1778. From his first appearance in public he showed more than ordinary ability as a speaker.

He opened his ministry as a local preacher in an old Colonial Church, in the southern part of the State, about the middle of the Revolutionary war. The parish minister was greatly enraged that an upstart Methodist preacher should have the temerity to preach in his chapel; and what was worse, that he should attract more people than the regular Successor of the Apostles.

In spite of the curate's violent opposition, he continued to preach in the chapel for more than a year, with increasing success. The people flocked to hear him, and great was the work of God under his powerful exhortations and earnest prayers. The next year he joined Asbury's Ironsides. He soon took a high position in the ranks of Methodism. He was one of the thirteen preachers selected by the Christmas Conference for the office of Elder; and from this period until his withdrawal from the Church, he continued without interruption to fill the office of Presiding Elder. During the whole of his time he labored on what was called the "South District of Virginia," which embraced nearly all the Southern counties of the State, with a portion of North Carolina. He exercised great influence over the preachers and people in this part of the work, and as a leader was regarded as hardly second to Asbury. He was the President of the Quarterly Conference, when William McKendree was recommended to the Annual Conference, and was regarded with peculiar veneration by his young friend. As we shall see, by his powerful influence, McKendree was for a time

alienated from Asbury, and went so far as to withdraw temporarily from the itinerant work.

One of O'Kelly's contemporaries describes him as "laborious in the ministry, a man of zeal and usefulness, an advocate for holiness, given to prayer and fasting, an able defender of the Methodist doctrine and faith, and hard against negro slavery, in private and from the press and pulpit."

Asbury and O'Kelly first met in North Carolina in 1780; the impression he made on the mind of Asbury was favorable. He "appeared to be a warm-hearted, good man." Again he writes: "James O'Kelly and myself enjoyed and comforted each other; this dear man rose at midnight and prayed very devoutly for me and himself. He cries, give me children or I die."

Such was O'Kelly in the early years of his ministry. The first decided opposition towards Asbury and his plans was evinced by him shortly after the adjournment of the first Council in 1789. He was a member of that body, and, while in session, "appeared to be united to the plan, and to the members." "But after he returned to Virginia," says Jesse Lee, "he exclaimed bitterly against the proceedings and against what he himself had done in the business. He refused to have anything at all to do with the second Council."

The supposition that prevailed at the time respecting this sudden change in his views, was, that he had gone to the first Council with the hope of being promoted in the Church, and, being wholly disappointed, he returned home greatly mortified and determined to

throw his powerful influence against the Council and all its measures. It was no doubt mainly through his management that the Council was "turned out of doors" at the Virginia Conference of 1790.

There can be but little doubt that his spirit was tainted by ambition. It is said that an English lawyer, a man of infidel principles, who, strange to say, admired the Methodist Church, and witnessed, with many expressions of regret, the O'Kellyan Schism, advised Jesse Lee and other leading ministers to make O'Kelly a Bishop. "For," said he, "if you will let him share that dreaded power with Asbury, he will no longer fear it." The history of O'Kelly's movements shows that the lawyer was nearer right than wrong.

Besides this, we are compelled, from the history of the times, to write him a heretic. "He denied," says Dr. Lee, "the distinct personality of the Holy Trinity. He affirmed that instead of distinct *persons* in the Godhead, the terms Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, were only intended to represent three *offices* of one glorious and Eternal Being." It was a favorite expression, as we learn from a living contemporary, that "God was Father from eternity, Redeemer in time, and Sanctifier for evermore." Of the truth of this charge we have already seen the proof in the proceedings of the Greenbrier Conference. He had raised doubts of the personality of the Trinity in the minds of two preachers from his District who were present at that Conference, and they only renounced their heretical opinions when their brethren confronted them with overwhelming Scriptural evi-

dence of the true doctrine. This was in May, six months before the meeting of the General Conference of 1792. We may well believe that a man so bold and confident as O'Kelly would not hesitate to give expression to his doctrinal views, and there is little doubt that many were led astray from the truth in the large District over which he presided so long.

His opposition to Asbury is boldly expressed in a letter to him, written in January, 1790. "I received," says Asbury, "a letter from the presiding elder of this District, (South District of Virginia,) James O'Kelly. He makes heavy complaints of my power, and bids me stop for one year, or he must use his influence against me. Power! power! there is not a vote given in a Conference in which the presiding elder has not greatly the advantage of me; all the influence I am to gain over a company of young men in a District must be done in three weeks; the greater part of them, perhaps, are seen by me only at Conference, whilst the presiding elder has had them with him all the year, and has the greatest opportunity of gaining influence. This advantage may be abused; let the bishops look to it; but who has the power to lay an embargo on me, and to make of none effect the decision of all the Conferences of the union?" One man, it would seem, fancied he possessed such power, and that man was James O'Kelly."

The influence of O'Kelly was used against Asbury with a success that should have satisfied any man who had not determined to rule or ruin the Church. The Council was O'Kelly's favorite hobby: he kept before the preachers and people the great evil of the

Council; magnified the power of Asbury as a Bishop until many were impressed with the belief that a great, overshadowing, ecclesiastical tyranny, was growing up in the Methodist Church. During his travels in Virginia, in the summer of 1790, Asbury saw the sad effects of O'Kelly's influence, and when he reached the Leesburg Conference, in August of that year, he showed a noble disinterestedness, as pleasing as it is rare. He says: "To conciliate the minds of our brethren in the South District of Virginia, who are restless about the Council, I wrote their leader a letter, informing him, 'that I would take my seat in Council as another member;' and, in that point, at least, waive the claims of episcopacy; yea, I would lie down and be trodden upon, rather than knowingly injure one soul."

This letter, with others of the same character from Asbury to the leaders of the opposition in Virginia, seems to have softened their spirits towards him.

Under date of September 21, 1791, he writes:

"I received the olive branch from Virginia. All is peace—it was obtained by a kind letter from me to O'Kelly." But the peace was of short duration; O'Kelly was maturing a plan by which he hoped to take out of the hands of Asbury the appointing power, and thus introduce the principle of Republicanism, as he called it, into the economy of Methodism.

The General Conference assembled at Baltimore, November 1st, 1792. It was a meeting of great interest to preachers and people. No such assemblage had been held since the Christmas Conference of 1784. The Council had proved an utter failure. It

was supposed, however, that an effort would be made to revive it. "But we were agreeably disappointed," says Jesse Lee, "for soon after we met together the Bishops and the preachers in general, showed a disposition to drop the Council and all things belonging thereto. And the Bishop requested that the name of the Council might not be mentioned in the Conference."

The triumph of O'Kelly over the unfortunate Council emboldened him to advance his favorite scheme. The most important business of the Conference was the revision of the Discipline. It was during the general discussion on this subject that O'Kelly brought forward an amendment to one of the fundamental regulations of the Church. This amendment involved the destruction of the itinerant system, by proposing to give a preacher the right to appeal from the decision of the Bishop in his appointments, and to the Conference the authority to order a change in the appointment.

The amendment was in the following words:

"After the Bishop appoints the preachers at Conference to their several circuits, if any one think himself injured by the appointment, he shall have liberty to appeal to the Conference and state his objections, and if the Conference approve his objections the Bishop shall appoint him to another circuit."

This startling proposition filled the minds of some with surprise, of others with sorrow. As it directly involved the administration of Asbury, he retired from the body, leaving Dr. Coke to preside. He wrote a short letter to the Conference in which he

says: "I am happy in the consideration that I never stationed a preacher through enmity, or as a punishment. I have acted for the glory of God, the good of the people, and to promote the usefulness of the preachers." He felt calm and secure in his conscious integrity. The debate on the amendment was highly exciting. The ablest men of Methodism were arrayed against each other. Three days the strife went on. At first there appeared to be a majority in favor of O'Kelly. The friends of the time-honored Wesleyan plan, feared that it would be swept away by the spirit of innovation. At length, by a skillful manœuvre, John Dickins, one of the ablest men in the body, brought the question to a direct issue. He proposed a division of the subject, thus:

1st. "Shall the Bishop appoint the preachers to the circuits?"

2. "Shall a preacher be allowed an appeal?" After some discussion the motion to divide was carried. The first question was then put to the vote and carried unanimously. When the Conference took up the second question a difficulty was started, whether this was to be considered a new rule, or merely an amendment of an old one. If regarded as a new rule, it could only pass by a two-thirds vote. After a long debate it was decided to be an amendment. The Conference by this action came back to the question as originally proposed. "Our rule for debates," says Jesse Lee, "was 'that each person, if he choose, shall have liberty to speak three times on each motion.' By dividing the question, and then coming back to where we were at first, we were kept on the

appeal for two or three days. On Monday we began the debate afresh, and continued it through the day; and at night we went to Mr. Otterbine's church, and again continued it till near bed-time, when the vote was taken, and the motion was lost by a large majority." The next morning a letter was received from O'Kelly and a few of his adherents, informing the Conference that as their resolution had been rejected, they could no longer retain their seats in that body. Efforts were at once made to conciliate them; a committee was appointed to wait on O'Kelly and his party, and if possible to persuade them to resume their seats; but the effort utterly failed. Dr. Coke had a personal interview with them, but his influence was powerless. O'Kelly raised many objections against him and the Conference; and expressed his firm purpose to have nothing more to do with their deliberations.

A few days after he and his partizans set out on their return to Virginia, "taking their saddle-bags, great coats and other bundles on their shoulders or arms, and walking on foot to the place where they had left their horses, which was about twelve miles from town."

"I stood and looked after them," says Jesse Lee, "as they went off, and observed to one of the preachers that I was sorry to see the old man go off in that way, for I was persuaded he would not be quiet long, but he would try to be the head of some party."

The preacher replied that he knew that O'Kelly had denied the doctrine of the Trinity, and that he had determined to prefer charges against him for

preaching heresy, and that he believed his fear of being brought to trial, had as strongly influenced him to leave as the failure of his appeal.

Asbury makes a brief allusion to his departure. "Mr. O'Kelly, being disappointed in not getting an appeal from any station made by me, withdrew from the connexion and went off. For himself the Conference well knew he could not complain of the regulation. He had been located to the South District of Virginia for about ten succeeding years; and upon his plan, might have located himself, and any preacher, or set of preachers, to the District, whether the people wished to have them or not."

The General Conference closed on the 14th of November, and on the 26th, Asbury opened the Virginia Conference at Manchester. Here two of the disaffected preachers, William McKendree and Rice Haggard, sent him "their resignation in writing." "We agreed," says Asbury to let our displeased brethren still preach among us; and as Mr. O'Kelly is almost worn out, the Conference acceded to my proposal of giving him his forty pounds per annum as when he travelled in the connexion, provided he was peaceable, and forbore to excite divisions among the brethren." For a portion of the year, O'Kelly consented to receive this money, for which he was indebted to the generosity of Asbury, but afterward refused it, and broke the last link that bound him to Methodism.

The feelings of McKendree were, however, not long alienated from Asbury and from the Church. The most probable account of his course has been

furnished by the venerable Henry Smith: "From a conversation with Mr. McKendree, I learned that the character of Bishop Asbury had been shamefully misrepresented to him by Mr. O'Kelly, and that on this account he obtained leave to travel with the Bishop, and, indeed, made it the condition of his remaining in the itinerancy. It is quite needless to say, that an intimate acquaintance with the beloved Bishop created a confidence and a friendship which each succeeding year cemented the more strongly till they were separated by death."

As a part of the history of the times, we are enabled to lay before the reader two original letters of O'Kelly, supposed to have been written a few months after his withdrawal from the General Conference.

They show the spirit of the man, and the nature of his complaints against Asbury.

"To Dear Brother Nicholson, Local Preacher:

O, my brother! Alas! my brother. I beseech God to grant you a share in every blessing of the everlasting covenant. O, brother, the heart knows its own bitterness. I am too often giving way to the overflowings of a full heart. O, the heart-breaking thoughts!—the Methodist preachers who stood together like regular soldiers, are now afraid of each other, as you told me last evening you feared me. Fearful prelude to a universal decline, or a fearful separation! Find out the cause; search for the Achan. One there is in our camps; and if the lot justly falls on me, cast me away, and there will be a calm. But be sure, before God, to give me justice. I am

not given to change. A Methodist I am, and how can I change. The elders to the North, not knowing what to accuse me of, make me their table laugh, still I am loth to go away.

"What have I done? Overturned government? What? the Council—not Methodism. I only say no man among us ought to get into the Apostle's chair with the Keys, and stretch a lordly power over the ministers and Kingdom of Christ. 'Tis a human invention, a quicksand; and when my grey hairs may be preserved under ground, I may be remembered. We ought to respect the body before any mere man. A consolidated government is always bad. We have published that we believed a General Conference to be injurious to the Church. District Conferences have lost their suffrages; men of wit will leave the travelling connection. Boys with their Keys, under the absolute sway of one who declares his authority and succession from the Apostles—these striplings must rule and govern Christ's Church, as master workmen; as though they could finish such a temple. People are to depend on their credibility. These things are so; I know what I say; I am able when called upon to answer it. I am a friend to Christ; to his Church, but not to prelatick government. If you will carefully read the Bishop's address to me and others of the preachers who oppose the late proceedings, there you will find the heresy reflections—and the very manner of the new constitution; but, unless you look over and over it, 'tis hard to understand. My dear brother, farewell; reject me, all of you, and let me feel the sneers, the

frowns of strangers. My days are few among you; when the members reject me I drop my journeyings.

"I am, &c.,

"JAMES O'KELLY."

The second letter is addressed to Colonel Williams, probably a leading Methodist, but we have no clue to his locality.

"No doubt you have heard I had resigned my place in Conference. I protest against a consolidated government, or any one Lord, or Arch-Bishop, claiming apostolic authority, declaring to have the Keys. Thus our ministry have raised a throne for Bishops, which being a human invention, a deviation from Christ and dear Mr. Wesley, I cordially refuse to touch. Liberty is contending for at the point of the sword in divers ways, monarchy, tyranny tumbling both in Church and Kingdoms, while our preachers are for erecting a throne for gentlemen Bishops in a future day, when fixed with an independent fortune they may sit and lord it over God's heritage. I speak in the fear of God, and feel for the dear people. District Conferences are nugatory, having given up their suffrages. Our preachers, so powerfully influenced by a few wise men, part located, have voted away their own liberty; no appeal for an injured man. The preacher sent hath sole power to receive or reject whom he will; if a sinner is by him admitted to the Sacrament, members are subject to commune with him and accounted accursed if they depart. What I say, I am able to make appear in the spirit of meekness with fear. I am still a true

man, and know what I say. If I would hold my peace, and stay at home, I might have during life £40 per annum. Would I do as some others wish, I might have peace and cash. I can do nothing against the truth; nor can I turn my mind as a man can his coat. I'de rather suffer with my own people.

"JAMES O'KELLY."

These letters reveal a morbid condition of mind in which O'Kelly seemed to see nothing but Asbury climbing over the ruins of a prostrate Church to the seat of an Arch-bishop. We can only look back with feelings of pity on a man who could thus wantonly assail Francis Asbury, whose course as a Christian Bishop affords not the slightest ground for such charges or suspicions. The first letter was addressed to the Rev. Jesse Nicholson, at that time a local preacher, residing in Portsmouth.

O'Kelly sought to impress his views on the Methodists in that place and in the adjacent country, but he was firmly opposed by Nicholson, Leroy Cole and McKendree, the latter having become fully satisfied that the accusations against Asbury were utterly groundless. They met him in public discussion, and saved the Church in Portsmouth from a violent rupture. In the section where he had so long labored he was more successful in his bad work. Some Societies were entirely led away by his specious plans; a few travelling, and a large number of local preachers followed him, and the O'Kellyan Schism became a fact in the history of Methodism.

At the Conference of 1793, the names of James

O'Kelly, Rice Haggard, John Allen and John Robertson were entered as formally withdrawn from the Connection. O'Kelly and Haggard, assisted by disaffected local preachers, at once began the work of organizing a new and pure Church, free from all such evils as they fancied had corrupted Methodism.

Allen settled, and soon after, entering upon the practice of medicine, gave up preaching altogether. Robertson remained local, and after some years became the head of a subordinate schism in the O'Kellyan ranks.

"The Republican Methodists," was the title chosen for the new Church.

The leaders proceeded to hold Conferences and other meetings for the purpose of deciding upon some settled plan of operations. They formed many rules, but upon trial found them extremely defective when compared with those they had abandoned. At length they renounced all rules of Church government, and took the New Testament as their guide. They agreed that all the plans and regulations made at their Conferences should be merely advisory. The name for their Church was suggested by the political complexion of the times. Republican principles prevailed in Virginia, and there was something to be gained by a Church bearing the imposing and popular name, "Republican Methodists."

One of their first measures was to enact a leveling law. All preachers were to stand on equal footing. There were to be no grades in the ministry. They endeavored to swell their numbers by promising the laity much larger liberty than they enjoyed in the

old Church. The leaders worked zealously, and not without success. In some places they carried off entire Societies, in others they wrought ruinous divisions. A few preaching houses were seized by them, and the rightful owners turned out of doors; from others the Methodists retired in order to avoid strife. Emboldened by these successes they began to abuse, to ridicule, and to say all manner of evil against the Methodist Church. They earnestly strove to turn the hearts of the members against the preachers. Asbury was the object of their peculiar displeasure. They took special pains to distort his character in every possible way before the public. The name of Bishop they professed to regard with holy horror. They confessed that *Bishop* and *Elder* had the same signification in Scripture; yet they received the one and rejected the other.

The spirit of division prevailed chiefly in the Southern counties of the State, and in the border counties of North Carolina. In all this region the influence of O'Kelly was very great, and he scrupled not to use it to the utmost of his ability in building up his own cause. And although his success in gaining proselytes from the ranks of Methodism was far less than he anticipated, yet the history of this painful schism is full of sad memorials, families were rent asunder; brother was opposed to brother, parents and children were arrayed against each other; warm friends became open enemies; the claims of Christian love were forgotten in the hot disputes about Church government. The means of grace were neglected; piety declined; religion was wounded in the house of her

friends, and the enemies of Christ exulted over many who had fallen away from the faith.

"It was enough," says Jesse Lee, "to make the saints of God weep between the porch and the altar, and that both day and night, to see how the Lord's flock was carried away captive by that division."

In the meanwhile O'Kelly labored diligently to sow broadcast the seeds of strife and disunion. By private letters and public harangues he strove to excite the public against Asbury and the old form of Church government.

Not long after his withdrawal from the Church he issued a pamphlet in which he gave his reasons for protesting against the "Methodist Episcopal Government.

This production was chiefly remarkable for its perversion of the plainest historical facts of Methodism, its misrepresentation of our economy, and its unbounded abuse of Asbury. His strictures on the government of the Church, as well as his defamation of Asbury, demanded a reply. Asbury himself collected ample materials for this purpose, and submitted them to the Conferences for their action. The papers were accepted, and a committee appointed to prepare them for publication. Nicholas Snethen, in behalf of the committee, published a work in which he "not only vindicated Methodism, but placed the pretended facts and groundless assertions of O'Kelly in a position so variant from truth, as to leave the character of their author in more need of an apology than was the mere fact of his ceasing to be a Methodist."

O'Kelly came forward in another small pamphlet,

entitled, "A Vindication of an Apology;" this was promptly met by Snethen in "An Answer to James O'Kelly's Vindication of his Apology."

The readiness with which O'Kelly's charges were met, and the ability with which they were refuted, gave a decided check to his revolutionary measures. He proceeded, however, with the formal organization of the "Republican Methodist Church." He scrupled not to ordain such preachers as consented to receive ordination at his hands, although he denounced Methodist ordination, in the line of which he stood, as a "spurious Episcopacy." The success of the Separatists in making proselytes, was far beneath their expectations. By a careful comparison of the returns from the large circuits in O'Kelly's old district, and where he wielded the greatest influence, we find that from 1792 to 1795, when the schism was at its height, the largest decrease in any one circuit was only a little over two hundred; while in two circuits, lying in the very field of strife, there was a gain of nearly four hundred. It is true that the returns from all the Virginia circuits in 1794 show a decrease of 2,000 members, but there were probably other causes for this besides the O'Kellyan movement.

In 1801, O'Kelly changed the name of his party. Renouncing their original title, he issued a pamphlet in which he announced himself and his adherents as "The Christian Church." Some of his societies readily assumed the high sounding name, others hesitated, a few protested, and divisions speedily followed. The more modest among them shrunk from an ap-

pellation that declared all men heretics except themselves. Divisions and subdivisions became the order of the day. One party clung to O'Kelly as "The Christian Church;" another followed John Robertson as Republican Methodists; and yet another, under the lead of William Guirey and others, set up for themselves under the title of "The Independent Christian Baptist Church." These different parties continued to maintain a sickly existence for some years, but their num ers and influence gradually diminished. As early as 1810, Jesse Lee wrote: "There are now but few of them in that part of Virginia where they were formerly the most numerous, and in most places they are declining." The decline continued untll there could be found no organization worthy to be called a church, but only fragments of societies scattered over the country, almost equally powerless against the Church they had left, and against the wickedness by which they were surrounded.

It is not difficult to discover the causes that produced the failure of O'Kelly's plans. The most potent was the heresy which his system contained. This was the taint that corrupted the whole scheme. His Unitarian errors allowed no Saviour to be offered to the people; and destitute of this vital and central force, his church was soulless, and its name a falsehood. But the motives of the leaders seem to have been devoid of purity as their system was of saving truth. "If the real cause of this division was known," says Asbury, "I think it would appear that one wanted to be immovably fixed in a District;

another wanted money; a third wanted ordination; a fourth wanted liberty to do as he pleased about slaves and not to be called to an account."

The fierceness of their attacks on Asbury contributed to their ruin. Their swords raised to strike him down, pierced their own hearts, and their violent dealings came down on their own heads. Their wrath against him knew no bounds.

In one of their ephemeral pamphlets he was called the "Baltimore Bull," and a rude picture of a bull's head graced the title-page. They proclaimed him an enemy to the country, and charged him with laying up money to carry with him to England. Speaking of the opposition of O'Kelly in comparison with that of others, he says: "Hammet was moderate, Glendenning not very severe; but James hath turned the butt-end of his whip, and is unanswerably abusive." Preaching at a certain place in Prince Edward county, he "was led to say a few things for himself, as to his coming to and staying in America—of the exercise of that power which was given by the first and confirmed by the last General Conference." Great pains had been taken to misrepresent and injure him in that section, but after his address "many of the people thought him not the monster he had been represented."

Such injustice could not fail to have a speedy and powerful reäction; and as the light shone more brilliantly on the path of Asbury, the darkness grew deeper on that of his traducers. Many who had been drawn off in a moment of excitement, after calming

down, and reëxamining the points in controversy, returned to the Church.

Although Asbury spared no pains to expose O'Kelly's errors, and to thwart his plans, yet he kept his heart right towards him, and, when occasion served, treated him with Christian courtesy. Their first and last meeting, after the rupture, took place at Winchester. Hearing that his former friend was lying ill, Asbury sent two brethren to say that he would wait on him if he desired it. They "met in peace, asked of each other's welfare, talked of persons and things indifferently, prayed, and parted in peace. Not a word was said of the troubles of former times." This, as far as we know, was their last interview on earth.

O'Kelly lived to an extreme old age, the sad spectator of the failure of his cherished schemes. He saw the man whom he had sought to ruin, descend to his grave in peace and full of honors, mourned by grateful thousands as the father of American Methodism. He saw his place filled and his principles defended by another, whom he had fondly marked for a leader in his own ranks. He saw hundreds of his own followers forsaking him, and rallying again to the standard of Methodism. He saw those who remained, scattered and broken into contending factions. All this he lived to witness, and in the face of all, the stern old man clung to his cause with a heroism worthy of a better fate, and with faltering voice and failing strength, proclaimed his confidence in its ultimate success. Hope did not desert him even "in age and feebleness extreme." We are as-

sured by one of his followers that he "went down to the grave satisfied with the past, and peaceful and trusting with respect to the future." His stormy and eventful life closed on the 16th of October, 1826, in the ninety-second year of his age.

For the year 1793, three Conferences were held in Virginia. The first opened at Alexandria a few days after the close of the General Conference; it was unimportant. "We had a close sitting in Conference, and completed our work in one day." Such is the brief record in Asbury's journal. The second began at Manchester on the 26th of November, 1792. Here there was much unpleasant feeling in reference to the recent action of the General Conference. As already noticed, two of the preachers resigned their places; they were both, however, entered in the Minutes as holding regular appointments. Asbury was pained, but not discouraged by these occurrences. He says: "I think our *sifting* and *shaking* will be for good. I expect a glorious revival will take place in America, and thousands be brought to God." The third Conference met in Greenbrier county on the 25th of May, 1793. A few items of what was done here have been preserved by Stith Mead.

The first day was mainly occupied in hearing the experiences of the preachers, and in receiving reports of their labors on the different circuits. The next day, Sunday, Asbury and Bruce preached ably and powerfully; they were followed by Kobler and Mead in exhortation, "after which several went to prayer; the windows of heaven appeared to be opened; we

had a great time, some were converted, and there was a great shout among the Christians."

On Monday the Conference was closely engaged examining the "Canons of our Church." This work over, the preachers received their appointments, and with glad hearts departed to their rough mountain circuits. At this Conference John Kobler was ordained Elder, and Edward Mitchell, a local preacher, Deacon. Kobler was one of the purest and most zealous of that noble band that planted Methodism in the wild regions of the West. He survived nearly all his contemporaries, and closed his useful life in great peace in the town of Fredericksburg, not many years since. He is said to have preached the first Methodist sermon on the ground now covered by the city of Cincinnatti. At that time a small fort and a few soldiers' huts were the only marks of civilization. Forty years afterward he found a beautiful city, covering the banks of the Ohio, and the grey-haired patriarch delivered his message to a multitude of eager hearers in an elegant Christian temple.

Father Kobler's account of his labors and travels in the West were highly entertaining. He often travelled his circuit with his trusty rifle, ready for the prowling savages that lurked along the mountain passes. Indeed, it was a common thing for many of our frontier preachers to make their guns as indispensable as their Bibles and Hymn Books. Sometimes, for greater security, they travelled in parties of three or four, and often, when they reached a friendly resting place, so excessive was their fatigue that they would fall asleep at the supper table. More than

once Father Kobler had to arouse the brother at his side to receive a cup of tea. The wearied man had fallen asleep before the good woman could prepare it.

Edward Mitchell merits our notice as a laborious and successful local preacher. He, and his brother Samuel, also a local preacher, contributed greatly to the establishment of Methodism in Botetourt and the adjacent counties. They formed several new circuits and organized a large number of classes. In everything but the name they were true itinerants. Edward Mitchell was born in Hanover county. At an early age he entered the Revolutionary army, in the same company with Patrick Henry. He served the cause of freedom with great fidelity, and was present at the bloody battle of Guilford. After the war he married and settled in Botetourt, where he embraced religion under the ministry of Henry Ogburn. As a Christian he was a burning and shining light, exhibiting constant, elevated, and warm-hearted piety. His labors as a preacher were acceptable and useful; he was an earnest co-laborer with the travelling preachers in all their plans. He was one of the first and most decided temperance men in the State. It is believed that he was the first to take a firm stand in favor of total abstinence. He banished whiskey wholly from his harvest field, a thing unheard of in those days, and gave the hands its value in money. His example had a happy influence on his neighbors; drunkenness decreased and temperance began to be regarded as a virtue. We are informed by those who knew him best, that "there was a beautiful consistency running through his whole life and char-

acter. In every relation he was all that his friends could wish or expect in this frail and imperfect state of being."

Many years ago he removed to the State of Illinois, and there, full of days, he fell like a shock of corn fully ripe. "He retained his faculties to the last, and sunk to the peaceful slumbers of the grave, leaving to his posterity the priceless legacy of a holy life." Many of the descendants of this good man in Virginia, and in the West, are enrolled as members of the Methodist Church.

The numbers reported this year from Virginia were 13,508 white, and 4,097 colored members. There had been a loss of nearly 600 whites, and a gain of a little more than 100 blacks. From the entire Connection, however, the returns showed an increase of 1,451.

Notwithstanding the unfortunate divisions from which the Church suffered in the eastern part of the State, in the west the work was greatly extended. In many places where Methodism was a new thing, there were extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit. The opposition of the world was aroused, and opprobrious epithets applied to Methodism, and its supporters. It was declared to be the "work of the Devil, the Black Art, Witchcraft, Hypocrisy," &c. Persons who had heard of the Methodist meetings came to them from a great distance, and when many lay around, slain by the sword of the Spirit, would pass about through the congregation feeling the pulse of those who lay as dead. Not unfrequently these curious philosophers were suddenly smitten with con-

viction, and fell to the floor, crying aloud for mercy. The civil power, in once instance at least, was invoked to arrest the progress of the work. In Greenbrier county a Presbyterian gentleman called the attention of the Court to the Methodist preachers on the circuit, and assured them if they could only behold the misery inflicted on the people by these men at their public meetings, they would order their expulsion from the county. As the preachers were not driven off, we may conclude that the Court wisely declined any action in the case.

The principal Conference in Virginia for 1794, assembled at Petersburg, November 25, 1793.* Two others of little importance were held west of the Blue Ridge in the spring of 1794; one at Edward Mitchell's in Botetourt, the other at or near Winchester. Forty-five preachers attended the Petersburg Conference. There was great unity and the power of God was felt in the meeting. A delegation was present from a number of disaffected members who had held a meeting at Pine Grove in Amelia circuit.

One of the delegates appeared to be satisfied and was ordained, the other two received a long and earnest "talk" from the Conference. This "long talk" probably resulted in nothing; the disaffected preachers and members continued their evil work to the injury of many souls.

* It must be remembered that while the series of Conferences for a given year opened in the fall of the preceding year, the returns and general results are not given until the close of the entire series. Thus, the Conferences for 1794 open in the Spring of 1793 and close in the fall of 1794 after which the General Minutes were made up.

The membership was reported at 13,600 white, and 4,069 colored members; the increase was only 100 whites, but this was greatly encouraging in the midst of the divisions created by O'Kelly and his party. Two new circuits, Leesburg and Pendleton, were added in Virginia. Two native Virginia preachers died this year, Henry Birchett and John Wynn. Birchett was born in Brunswick and had been in the ministry six years. The Minutes speak of him as "a gracious, happy, useful man, who had freely offered himself for four years" on the dangerous stations of Kentucky and Cumberland. Notwithstanding the pain in his breast and spitting of blood, the danger of the Indians, and prevalence of the small-pox, he went, a willing martyr. He was one among the worthies who freely left safety, ease and prosperity, to seek after and suffer faithfully for souls. His meekness, love, labors, prayers, tears, sermons and exhortations will not soon be forgotten. He wanted no appeal from labor, danger or suffering." The language of his heart and life was

> "No cross, no suffering I decline,
> Only let all my heart be thine."

John Wynn was a native of Sussex county. He was young but gifted—"a man of address and natural elocution, of an upright heart, a son of affliction, willing to labor to the last." He died in great peace at the early age of twenty-seven.

In view of the evils that filled the land, the general sickness that prevailed, and the low state of religion in the Churches, the Conference at Petersburg issued an address appointing a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer.

Of this address we are fortunately able to give an authentic copy.

"The brethren in the Ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, seated in Conference at Petersburg, November 25, 1793, having in their most serious consideration the present aspect of the Christian Church, and deploring the formality, worldly-mindedness and awful want of union that appear in it; the unanimated state of our most solemn assemblies, and that very few in some parts, have possessed of late the awakening, converting, and sanctifying grace of God; the neglect of justice and truth in the land and the most horrid sins that prevail as a reproach to the Christian name; the state of the seasons of the year; the late dreadful contagion in the city of Philadelphia; the general sickness that hath been spreading from North to South, and from East to West; the Indian depredations, and apparent disaffection to the States, together with the European commotions. That these may not be suffered to disturb the peace and good government of America, do most heartily solicit our Societies, and congregations, and recommend the fourth Friday in January, 1794, as a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer to Almighty God through Christ, to hear and keep his Church and this land. We desire the day may be wholly devoted to God in a Sabbath strictness; hoping, as some thousands of our brethren in the North have been united in this exercise, so thousands Southward and Westward will unite with us to keep such a day as hath not been kept heretofore."

F. Asbury

This was a year of serious trouble and distress to the Methodists in Virginia, and other Southern States. Besides the painful divisions and heartburnings that followed the movements of O'Kelly and his party, there appeared the buddings of discontent on several vital questions. Many of the malcontents openly declared that local preachers ought to have the right to sit and vote in all the Conferences; others insisted that there ought to be a delegation of lay members.

The response to the disaffected parties is thus given by Jesse Lee: "We supposed that where there was taxation there ought to be representation; but we did not tax any one. We only regulated our own business and fixed on certain plans for governing the Church, and for taking care of those persons who had put themselves under our care, and were still willing to be governed by us."

The effect of these warm contentions was a decline in piety and numbers in many of our older circuits. Asbury was charged with being the author of nearly all the evils which afflicted the Church. "I preached," he writes, "(though not of choice) at Charlotte Court House; here Mr. —— met me, and charged me with saying at —— 'that they would take off my head.' I told him I did not remember to have said so, but if I did, I must certainly have meant the Episcopacy of our Church; he answered, in that I was very right, he strove to do it with all his might; yet he talked of union, and hoped I would do my part. At what? Why, to destroy; First, the Episcopacy, and then the Conference—or at least its power and authority." Speaking in another place of

the bitter opposition evinced toward him in another circuit, he says: "Let them curse, but God will bless and his faithful preachers will love and pity me."

The Virginia Conference for 1795 was appointed for Petersburg, but owing to the prevalence of small pox in the town it was removed to Mrs. Mabry's in Greensville county, where the session was opened November 27, 1794.

According to Stith Mead, who was present, there were seventy-five preachers in attendance. They met for business at 9 o'clock in the morning, and adjourned at four in the afternoon. On the first day "five young preachers were strictly examined and received on trial." The second day was spent in "examining the characters of the preachers, and hearing their experiences;" on the third day (Saturday) the same exercises were continued. "On Sunday," says Mead, "about forty of us coupled ourselves in order and rode to the meeting house, where we heard thirteen preachers who were to be ordained to the eldership, and four others to the deaconship, examined on doctrine." Asbury then preached "a great and profitable discourse" on Zephaniah ii: 6. Reuben Ellis followed with "a profitable discourse" from 2 Cor. ix: 12. The candidates were then ordained in the presence of the congregation. On Monday the Conference touched the vexed question of slavery. "We this day," says Mead, "adopted a restricting clause in our by-rules, that no itinerant preacher in our Conference should involve himself in the oppressive *Bane* of negro slavery, where it was possible to

free them, at the risk of forfeiting his honor and itinerancy among us; to which about seventy itinerant preachers subscribed their names." This was a voluntary agreement and only bound those who signed it. Asbury is to the same effect but more explicit: "The preachers almost unanimously entered into an agreement and resolution not to hold slaves in any State where the law will allow them to manumit them, on pain of forfeiture of their honor and their place in the itinerant connexion; and in any State where the law will not admit of manumission, they agreed to pay them the worth of their labor, and when they die to leave them to some person or persons, or the Society, in trust, to bring about their liberty."

This was a mere agreement entered into by a number of preachers, and cannot be regarded as a Conference action in any strict sense. It was one of those periodical assaults against slavery by which the Church lost much more than she gained.

Asbury gives us a view of the finances at this Conference: "After raising and applying what money we could, (which was about £50,) we calculated that one-fourth of the preachers at this Conference had received for their salary the past year about £10; one-half, from about £12 to £15; and one-fourth, their full quarterage, (sixty-four dollars)."

The Conference was a peaceful and happy one. "I was agreeably disappointed," says Mead, "in my expectations; from the late schism I feared we should have a disagreeable Conference, but the God of love overruled and turned the discordant minds of

the disaffected; all that were shaken acknowledged their errors with tears, and the Lord was visibly present."

The returns made for 1795 showed a membership in Virginia of 11,235 whites, and 2,764 blacks. The decrease from the previous year was 3,670. The Church began to feel the effects of the divisions caused by the incessant efforts of O'Kelly and his followers.

The Conference for 1796 assembled at Salem Chapel, Mecklenburg county, on the 24th of November, 1795. Fifty members and sixteen probationers were present. Ten Elders and nine Deacons were ordained. "We had close work," says Asbury, "and great harmony in sentiment." The Conference had a happy influence on the Societies in that section of the work. "For five years they had been kept out of tune by unhappy divisions," but from this time they began to regain their "proper tone," and to move forward in the path of usefulness. The Society at Salem was one of the first gathered by the pioneer preachers. The families with whom Asbury delighted to rest and refresh himself, in his wearisome travels, still have their honored representatives in the Church. At "Ogburn's" he was always glad to meet the "gracious old people," and with them he used to have "melting seasons." "Holmes'" he calls an "ancient stand," and not far off was Salem, "the best house we have in the country part of Virginia." The old "Salem Chapel" has not been materially changed since the days of Asbury; at least, within the memory of the author, the house stood as it did when the Conferences used to assem-

ble there. And not a few of the present generation of preachers have stood in the same pulpit, perched aloft on the side of the house, from which Asbury, Bruce, the Ellis's, and other fathers of the Church preached the word of life.

For the first time, the members were this year taken by States. Virginia reported 11,321 white, and 2,458 colored members. There was a small increase of whites, but a loss of 300 among the blacks.

The Virginia Conference was called to mourn the loss of three able and zealous preachers.

Reuben Ellis, after twenty year's hard service in the work, fell at the post of duty and passed to his reward. One of the earliest of "Asbury's Ironsides," he had carried the gospel into Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia. He was "a man of slow, but very sure and solid parts, both as a counsellor and guide;" as a preacher he was "weighty and powerful;" his character was marked by "simplicity and godly sincerity." He sought not the things of this world. "His horse, his clothing, and immediate necessaries, were all he appeared to want of the world." He was a true hero, ever ready to fill any appointment, although in doing so he might have to pass "through the fire of temptation, and the waters of affliction."

Suddenly the path of this good man opened into everlasting rest. The verdict of his brethren was, that he left none behind him "in all the Connection higher, if equal in standing, piety and usefulness."

Richard Ivy had served the Church as an itinerant for eighteen years. He was a co-laborer with Ellis,

and like him had preached Christ in almost every part of the work. "He sought not himself," says the Minutes, "any more than did a Pedicord, a Gill, or a Tunnell; men who never thought of growing rich by the gospel; their great concern was to be rich in grace and useful to souls." He was "a man of quick and solid parts;" powerful and animated in the pulpit, and bold as a lion in the cause of his Master. An incident recorded of him will illustrate his fearlessness as a preacher of righteousness. During the Revolutionary war he travelled a circuit in New Jersey, in which lived a number of influential Methodists who were supposed to be unfriendly to the American cause. As a matter of ccurse, their preachers also fell under suspicion. A company of soldiers, quartered near one of the appointments, determined to arrest the first preacher that came, and carry him to headquarters. Ivy, then a young man, was the first to reach the place. Rumors of what was to occur brought out a large congregation. Soon after the people were convened, a file of soldiers marched into the yard, and halted near the door. Two officers then entered the house, drew their swords, crossed them on the table in front of the preacher, and seated themselves, one on each side of it, so as to look him full in the face. The preacher rose and calmly announced his text: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

After a lucid exposition, he began to enforce the exhortation, "Fear not." "Christians," he said, "sometimes fear when there is no cause for fear."

So he supposed it was with some then present. Those men who were engaged in the defence of their country meant them no harm. He then spoke in animated strains in favor of the cause of freedom, glancing now at the crossed swords on the table, and then at the officers, as if he would say, This looks like domestic oppression; and then, as he closed his sermon, he bowed to the officers, and opening his bosom at the same moment, exclaimed: "Sirs, I would fain show you my heart; if it beats not high for ligitimate liberty, may it forever cease to beat." His words and manner thrilled the whole audience. The officers tried to frown, then to smile contemptuously. Catching inspiration from the scene, the preacher launched out again in more fervid strains; the people sobbed aloud, and cried "Amen!" the officers hung their heads and trembled like the leaves of an aspen; the soldiers at the doors and windows swung their hats, and shouted, "Huzza for the Methodist parson!" Ivy was victorious. The officers on leaving shook hands with him, and wished him well. They afterward said they would share their last shilling with such a man.

A son of affliction, Ivy bore a feeble body through years of toil, and "lingered out his latter days, spending his all with his life in the work." He fell asleep in Jesus in his native county, Sussex, and in the midst of his friends.

Stephen Davis, after seven years of faithful service, fell a victim to "the pestilential fever" at Norfolk. He was of an old and honored Methodist family, whose descendants still abide in the member-

ship and ministry of the church. His mother's house in Gloucester county was the first opened to the Methodist preachers; here they found a home and formed a Society, "from which there was a gracious spread of the gospel throughout the county." God honored the house by putting one of the sons into the ministry. Stephen Davis was a man of deep and fervent piety, a "very able and intelligent preacher." His memory was so extraordinary as to be noticed in his brief obituary record in the Minutes. He was diligent in business, and like Paul, often wrought with his own hands, that he might not be chargeable to the Church. In the beginning of the O'Kellyan excitement he was persuaded to take sides against the Church, but he was soon convinced of his error, and stood forth as a "faithful and successful defender of the order and government" of Methodism. His knowledge of O'Kelly and his schemes enabled him to expose his schism in all its plans and purposes, as well as the false assumptions on which it rested; this he did fearlessly, sometimes meeting the leader face to face, refuting his arguments, and boldly denouncing him as a disturber of the peace of the Church. Many wavering souls were saved to Methodism by his watchfulness and energy.

He stood bravely at his post in Norfolk when the fever broke out, and fell as a Christian soldier in good hope of eternal life. He left his property to be divided among his brethren of the Virginia Conference.

Asbury passed on to the South from the Virginia Conference, and in the Spring returned on his usual

route through the wild region lying along the French Broad and Holston Rivers. Having reached Russell county, he writes of the hardy settlers who had suffered greatly from the depredations of the Indians. "They have lived in peace ever since the death of Ben, the half-blood Indian warrior, who was shot through the head while carrying off two women. He was a dreadfully wicked wretch, and had been the agent of death to nearly one hundred people in the wilderness and on Russell."

While in this region he attended the funeral services of Mrs. F. Dickenson, the thrilling narrative of whose capture by the Indians he relates. It is a graphic picture of the trials of the early settlers in Western Virginia:

"She was married to a Mr. Scott, and lived in Powell's Valley; at which time the Indians were very troublesome, often killing and plundering the inhabitants. On a certain evening her husband and children being in bed, eight or nine Indians rushed into the house; her husband being alarmed, started up when all that had guns fired at him. Although he was badly wounded, he broke through them all, and got out of the house. Several of them closely pursued him, and put an end to his life. They then murdered and scalped all her children before her eyes, plundered the house, and took her prisoner. The remainder of the night they spent around a fire in the woods, drinking, shouting, and dancing. The next day they divided the plunder with great equality; among the goods was one of Mr. Wesley's hymn-books, she asked them for it, and they gave it to her;

but when they saw her often reading therein they were displeased and took it from her, calling her a conjurer. After this they travelled several days' journey toward the Indian towns; but, said she, my grief was so great I could hardly believe my situation was a reality, but thought I dreamed. To aggravate my grief, one of the Indians hung my husband's and my children's scalps to his back, and would walk next before me. In walking up and down the hills and mountains, I was worn out with fatigue and sorrow; they would often laugh when they saw me almost spent, and mimic my panting for breath. There was one Indian more humane than the rest. He would get me water, and make the other stop when I wanted to rest. Thus they carried me on eleven days' journey, until they were greatly distressed with hunger. They then committed me to the care of an old Indian at the camp, while they went off a hunting.

"While the old man was busily employed in dressing a dear-skin, I walked backward and forward through the woods, until I observed he took no notice of me. I then slipped off and ran a considerable distance and came to a cane-break, where I hid myself very securely. Through most of the night I heard the Indians searching for me, and answering each other with a voice like an owl. Thus was I left alone in the savage wilderness, far from any inhabitants, without a morsel of food, or any friend to help, but the common Saviour and friend of all. To him I poured out my complaint in fervent prayer that he would not forsake me in this distressing circumstance. I then set out the course that I thought Kentucky

lay, though with very little expectation of seeing a human face again, except that of the savages, whom I looked upon as so many fiends from the bottomless pit; and my greatest dread was that of meeting some of them while wandering in the wilderness.

"One day, as I was travelling, I heard a loud human voice, and a prodigious noise, like horses running. I ran into a safe place and hid myself, and saw a company of Indians pass by, furiously driving a gang of horses which they had stolen. I had nothing to subsist upon but roots, young grape-vines, and sweet-cane, and such like produce of the woods. I accidently came where a bear was eating a deer, and drew near in hopes of getting some; but he growled and looked angry, so I left him, and quickly passed on. At night, when I lay down to rest, I never slept but I dreamed of eating. In my lonesome travels I came to a very large shelving rock, under which was a fine bed of leaves. I crept in among them, and I determined there to end my days of sorrow. I lay there several hours, until my bones ached in so distressing a manner that I was obliged to stir out again. I then thought of and wished for home; and travelled on several days, till I came where Cumberland River breaks through the mountains.

"I went down the cliffs a considerable distance until I was affrighted, and made an attempt to go back, but found the place down which I had gone was so steep that I could not return. I then saw but one way that I could go, which was a considerable perpendicular distance down to the bank of the river. I took hold of the top of a little bush, and for half an

hour prayed fervently to God for assistance. I then let myself down by the little bush until it broke, and I went with great violence down to the bottom. This was early in the morning, and I lay there a considerable time with a determination to go no further. About ten o'clock I grew so thirsty, that I concluded to crawl to the water and drink, after which I found I could walk.

"The place I came through, as I have since been informed is only two miles, and I was four days in getting through it. I traveled on until I came to a little path, one end of which led to the inhabitants and the other to the wilderness. I knew ot which end of the path to take. After standing and praying to the Lord for direction, I turned to take the end that led to the wilderness. Immediately there came a little bird ot a dove-color near to my feet, and fluttered along the path that led to the inhabitants. I did not observe this much at first, until it did it a second or third time. I then understood this as a direction of Providence, and took the path which led me to the inhabitants."

"Immediately after her safe arrival she embraced religion, and lived and died an humble follower of Christ."

CHAPTER X.

Districting the Conferences—Asbury on his Southern tour—Failure of health—He winters in Virginia—Employment of his time—Indoor life—Sermonizing—Great revival of 1797—Conferences of 1798-'9—John Dickins—Methodism in Richmond—Conference of 1800—Statistics—Third General Conference—Measures adopted—Purpose of Asbury to resign his office—He is dissuaded from it—Election of Whatcoat to the Episcopacy—Progress of Methodism in Virginia—Rich fruits of ministerial toil.

PREVIOUS to the year 1797 the Annual Conferences had no fixed limits, and were usually composed of the preachers of one or two districts. The General Conference, which assembled at Baltimore on the 20th of October, 1796, limited their number to six for the entire field of Methodism, and determined their boundaries. The reasons assigned for this action show the wisdom of our fathers: "For several years the Annual Conferences were very small, consisting only of the preachers of a single district, or of two or three very small ones. This was attended with many inconveniences.

1. There were but few of the senior preachers whose years and experience had matured their judgments, who could be present at any one Conference.

2. The Conferences wanted that dignity which

every religious synod should possess, and which always accompanies a large assembly of gospel ministers.

3. The itinerant plan was exceedingly cramped, from the difficulty of removing preachers from one district to another."

All of these difficulties they hoped to obviate by enlarging the limits of the Annual Conferences. They also cherished the hope "that the active, zealous unmarried preachers might move on a larger scale, and preach the ever blessed gospel far more extensively through the sixteen States, and other parts of the continent; while the married preachers, whose circumstances require them in many instances, to be more located than the single men, will have a considerable field of action opened to them; and also the Bishops will be able to attend the Conferences with greater ease, and without injury to their health."

Under this new arrangement, "The Virginia Conference embraced "all that part of Virginia which lies on the south side of the Rappahannock River, and all that part of North Carolina which lies on the north side of Cape Fear River, including also the circuits which are situated on the branches of the Yadkin."

In addition to that portion of the State here indicated, the Conference embraced all the circuits west of the Blue Ridge. The only part of Virginia distinctly named as included in another Conference, was the Northern Neck, which was assigned to the Baltimore Conference.

Two Conferences were held in Virginia within the limits of the Conference year 1797.

"It was thought best," says Jesse Lee, "to take in the Conference in Virginia which was held in 1796, and that also which wa held in this year (1797), and by that means the Conferences would be changed about, so as to begin them in future in the South, and finish them in the North."

The first Virginia Conference for the year was held at the house of "Brother Batt, in Greensville county on the 15th of November, 1796. Asbury gives a very brief notice of this body and its doings. "Our Conference began at Brother Batt's, a most convenient house and very kind people. We sat in great peace and good order. A few preachers declined travelling. We elected and ordained six elders and nine deacons. The deficiencies of the preachers amounted to upwards of £194 Virginia currency." Dr. Coke was present at this Conference and divided the labors of the pulpit and the chair with Asbury.

The second Conference was held at Lane's Chapel in Sussex county, November 25th, 1797. Our only information as to what was done is from the meagre entry in Asbury's journal. "Saturday, 25th November. The Conference began their sitting at Lane's Chapel. About sixty preachers were present; nine or ten had located; and four or five were added.

On Sabbath day two hours were spent in speaking of the circuits, and for souls.

Wednesday, 29. At noon the Conference rose; the business was conducted with dispatch and in much peace. I desired the advice of the Conference concerning my health; the answer was, that I should

rest until the session of the Conference to be held in April in Virginia."

The returns from the circuits showed a white membership of 11,046, and a colored of 2,490. There had been a loss of nearly 300 white members, but a small increase among the blacks.

From the Virginia Conference Asbury in pain and feebleness, began his Southern tour. His route was "fixed by Norfolk, Portsmouth, Newbern, Kingston, Georgetown and Charleston—between five and six hundred miles in little more than a month; sick or well, living or dead, my appointments go on." Of his bodily sufferings on this journey, he writes: "I came twenty-five miles to Edward Dromgoole's; once or twice I felt on my way thither as if the blood would rise in my mouth. I resolved to give up travelling this winter. Dr. Sims bled me; and there appeared an inflammatory buff on the top. O! to rest—to be idle and dependent is painful; but if this is to make me perfect, the will of the Lord be done! I sent my papers to Brother Lee who proceeds to Charleston, also my plan and directions how to station th preachers, to Brother Jackson. I believe that my going to Charleston this season would end my life; yet could I be persuaded it was the will of God I would go and preach. I cannot bear the fatigue of riding thirty miles in a day. I am much pressed to make my will, lest I should be surprised by death; my mind is greatly calmed and centred in God. I have well considered all the solemnities of death."

Worn down by disease and almost daily threatened with death, Asbury was compelled to give up all hope

of reaching the Southern Conference. He passed the entire winter among his old and cherished friends in Brunswick and the adjacent counties. His time was not misspent, though he was enabled to preach only an occasional sermon. He wrote letters to all parts of the connexion, read and revised his journals, and studied as much as his feeble condition would allow. That portion of his journal embracing this period is full of interest and instruction. It is a simple, life-like picture of a good man suffering cheerfully and laboring zealously for Christ. Speaking of his bodily afflictions, he says: "The smallest exercise or application to study is too great for me. The doctor pronounces my complaint to be debility. I have taken cider with nails put into it, and fever powders, and must take more of the barks." The winter was a severe one, and in his debilitated state he suffered greatly with the cold. "I slept under two double-milled blankets, besides coverlids and sheets, but could not keep warm. It is cold enough for the North. Strange life for me to sit and burn myself by the fire and be nursed. I feel a small return of health. I cannot preach now, only to the family and when a stranger cometh in." His "small return of health" was but transient. He writes soon after this entry: "It is exceedingly cold. The pain in my breast is returned; I fear it is immovably fixed more or less until death. Lord, thy will be done! Wearisome days are appointed for me." Again he writes: "I am now taking an extraordinary diet—drink made of one quart of hard cider, one hundred nails, a handful of black snake-root, one handful of fennel

seed, one handful of wormwood, boiled from a quart to a pint, taking one wine-glass full every morning for nine or ten days, using no butter, or milk, or meat. I was better in my feelings than I have been since I have been taken ill; but I must flee conversation, grief and care, with deep and close thinking and composition." It would be strange to find even so holy a man without some moments of depression in the course of a lingering illness. "When I get sick and dispirited, I think, was I not a bishop, and required by duty, and necessity and conscience, to do the best I can, I would rather go into some line of business to get my living, and not lounge about. I feel for those who have had to groan out a wretched life dependent on others—as Pedicord, Gill, Tunnell, and other whose names I do not now recollect; but their names are written in the book of life, and their souls are in the glory of God."

He gives us this picture of his indoor life: "It is such cloudy weather I cannot go out; I wind cotton, hear the children read, and teach them a little grammar. I have, by the help of a scribe, marked the States I have traveled through for these twenty years; but the movements are so quick (travelling day and night) it seems that the notes upon two or three hundred miles are only like a parish and a day—on paper."

A few days after he writes: "I can only make a few weak observations. What little pen-work I dare do, has been in writing a letter to York. I shall only journalize a little, and never enter deeply into my other subjects. I scorn to be idle; the past week

hath been spent in the cotton work with my fingers, and in hearing the children read and instructing them in English grammar."

His religious meditations during these weary months give a lively view of his method of sermonizing.

On one of his lonely Sabbaths he writes:

"We sat melancholy in the house—dumb Sabbaths! Dr. Sims read me Mr. Wesley's sermon upon the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God. Monday, I was led to meditate upon the same subject: 'By whom shall Jacob rise?' 1. Jacob—the Church. 2. Rise to spiritual glory. 3. By whom Jacob hath risen. 4. By whom the Church shall rise—it is a profitable character of the Church. Jacob—see that man loved by his mother, hated by his brethren after the flesh, guarded against unlawful marriages, yet had two wives, representing the Jewish and Gentile state of the Church. See his afflictions and persecutions; the danger of being extinct in his family; yet preserved; his children; his piety; his prayers. A type of Christ and his Church. Jacob rise! rise, increase in children, in faith, in love, mercy, in justice, in truth, in zeal, in ministerial gifts, in faithful watchmen. By whom hath the Church risen? By Abel, by Enoch, by Noah, by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; by Moses and Aaron, Joshua and the elders that outlived Joshua; by Joel, by Ruth, by Obadiah, servant of Ahab, by Micah, by Joash, by Jotham, Hezekiah, and his grandson Josiah; and all the prophets; by the great wrestling Jacob; by Jesus and his Apostles; by faithful min-

isters in all ages, nations, and societies. We want knowledge to know, and time to mention their names. By whom shall Jacob rise? God will pour out his Spirit in the last days on ministers and people, old men and maidens, young men and children, ministers and members of his Church, magistrates and masters, parents and guardians. He is small: see all the little flock—the holy seed; all the weaknesses, all the apostates and backsliders, all the want of justice, mercy, truth, and true religion; these shall be replaced with opposite characters and graces; all the vacancies of ministers and virtues shall be filled up, and more abundantly supplied in spiritual and heavenly glory, when all shall know the Lord, and be taught of the Lord, and all be righteous, and the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the water doth all the deep places of the earth and the seas.

By whom shall Jacob rise? I answer, by the wisdom, power, mercy, truth, love and holiness of God, displayed in a glorious gospel. I am sure Jacob shall rise by the merits, righteousness, and intercession of Jesus Christ. I answer again, by the operations of the eternal Spirit of God, in his convincing, converting, and sanctifying influences, manifested by the calling and qualifying ministers for the work; that thousands of ministers may go forth, and millions of souls may be brought home by their instrumentality."

Again he writes: "My thoughts were led to meditate upon 1 Timothy iv: 16: 'Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for

in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.'

"I. 'Take heed to thyself'—in religion, as in nature, self-preservation is one of the first laws. Take heed that thy experience in religion and doctrine be sound; that thou hast a good heart and a good head, and a good life, and a good conversation, ministerial diligence and fidelity in every part of Christian and pastoral duty. Saved by grace, thou shalt be preserved from all the snares set for thy feet, and not backslide as a Christian minister, but feel persevering, sanctifying, glorifying and crowning grace.

"II. Thou shall 'save them that hear thee,' from lukewarmness and backsliding; legality on the one hand, and making void the law through faith on the other; that they profess and possess, live and walk as it becometh the gospel of Christ.

"III. 'Continue in them,' in all the doctrines, ordinances and duties of the gospel; the same gospel, the same ordinances, the same duties which are designed to complete the work in the souls of ministers as Christians, are as needful to continue the work of grace as to begin it; and not only continue but to finish and bring on the head-stone with shouting."

We give another specimen: "I read in my Bible, and selected those texts which struck my mind, that if ever I should preach again I may use. Joseph said, I fear God; Nehemiah said, he could not oppress the people as other governors had done, because of the fear of God.

Fear of God, in seekers, in believers, and in those who are sanctified; and the motives to the fear God.

First, he is holy; *Secondly*, he is wise; *Thirdly*, he is just; *Fourthly*, he is powerful. If holy, he hath no sin, if wise, he knoweth when we sin; if he is just, he must punish sin; and he hath power to punish it. A man may be wise but not all-wise; a man may be just but not infinite in justice; thus man may be holy, but not holy as God; man may be wanting in wisdom, in power, in holiness, and in justice. In some cases it may not be man's duty to punish, nor in his power—not so with Jehovah. Who will not fear him according to his attributes, and according to his word of threatened vengeance?"

In reference to his journal he writes: "I have well considered my Journal; it is inelegant, yet it conveys much information of the state of religion and country. It is well suited to common readers; the wise need it not. I have a desire that my journals should be published, at least after my death, if not before. I make no doubt that others have *labored;* but in England, Scotland and Ireland, and those kingdoms which have been civilized and improved one thousand years, and which are under such improvements, no ministers could have *suffered* in those days, and in those countries, as in America, the most ancient parts of which have not been settled over two hundred years, some parts not forty, others not thirty, twenty nor ten, and some not five years. I have frequently skimmed along the frontiers for four and five hundred miles, from Kentucky to Greenbrier, on the very edge of the wilderness; and thence along Tiger's Valley to Clarksburg on the Ohio. These places, if not haunts of savage men, yet abound with wild beasts. I am

known only by name to many of our people, and some of our local preachers; and unless the people were all together, they could not tell what I have had to cope with. I make no doubt the Methodists are, and will be a numerous and wealthy people, and their preachers who follow us will not know our struggles but by comparing the present improved state of the country with what it was in our days, as exhibited in my Journal and other records of that day."

It was not until the Spring had fully opened, with its genial weather, that Asbury resumed his toils as a Methodist Bishop. He was scarcely able to ride more than ten or fifteen miles a day. In view of the long journey before him he writes:

"I have entered upon a tour of two thousand miles before I may probably see this part of the land again. O, can I perform such toil? Weakness of body maketh me feel great heaviness of mind. I must think, speak, write and preach a little, or I may as well give up my station."

The year 1797 was a season of most gracious visitation to the churches in Virginia. In Greensville, Cumberland, and Bedford, the work of the Lord revived with great power. But the most copious outpourings of the Spirit were received in Gloucester and the adjacent circuits, under the preaching of William McKendree, Leroy Cole and Stith Mead. Signs of revival appeared early in the Spring in different parts of Matthews and Gloucester. There were "general tremblings throughout the congregations." Under the preaching of the word at the regular appointments there were powerful convictions,

loud cries for mercy, and many clear and joyous conversions. These indications increased in number and importance, until on Whitsunday, at Mount Zion, a chapel erected by Mrs. Mary Mason Tabb, a lady of wealth and refinement, the friend of Asbury, and a mother in our Israel, a most extraordinary work broke out. "While I was preaching," says Mead, "my own soul being overwhelmed by a supernatural power, an awful trembling took place throughout the congregation." The revival began instantaneously. The slain of the Lord fell on every side. The wail of the penitent, mingling with the shout of the convert, and the songs of the children of God, made music such as angels delight to hear. For more than a week the people crowded to the place in vast numbers. The word preached each day was immediately attended by the power of the Holy Ghost. The flame kindled here spread through the circuit like fire in dry stubble. Eager multitudes thronged the meeting houses. "Shrieking sinners fell on every hand, strewing the floors, and lay bathed in tears and sweat, regardless of their powdered heads, ribbons, ruffles, rings, and other finery." The physical indications were distressing to behold. "Stagnated blood, cramped flesh, drawn sinews, cries and groans," marked the anguish of the guilty soul. The work was general, deep, and genuine, embracing all classes and ages, from the child of six or seven summers, to the grey haired sire of seventy. Meetings were often kept up the whole night, and in the daytime hardly ever closed under five or six hours. Often the mourners were taken from the churches to private houses near by, and the work

went on in the mansions of the rich, the cottages of the poor, and even in the cabins of the slaves. More than five hundred were added to the Church during the year, and among them many persons of great wealth and influence. The oldest Methodists declared that they had never witnessed such displays of divine power. At the regular week-day appointments it was no unusual thing for five, ten, and sometimes twenty to be converted before the meeting closed.

This glorious work was not accomplished without great opposition from Satan and his agents. Stith Mead, on account of his zeal and success, was honored with a full share of persecution. Of his troubles he writes: "Persecution has grown to perfection. The burden mostly falls on me, yet my colleague has his share. At the beginning I was styled a madman; it was declared that I threw my Bible at a man's head; others said if I had my deserts I would be tied neck and heels and cast out of the meeting house. I visited a neigboring Quarterly Meeting, and it was reported that I had murdered a man, stolen his money and horse, and run off. Some said I deserved to have my neck broken; while others determined that I should not return out of Matthews county alive. I went on board of a new ship, on the stocks, and they declared that I had laid a spell on her so that she could not be launched." He was described as a "master devil," and the Methodists as "under devils," dancing round him at his meetings.

A dancing master whose school was broken up by the revival, came to him in a great rage, wishing that he were dead and damned. He was threatened with

a suit of tar and feathers, and often stood in peril of his life.

He faced all these dangers manfully, and remained at his post and God put great honor upon him as a preacher of the word.

In the midst of his labors and persecutions he exclaims: "Blessed be God my Saviour! Tho' the waters have gone over me, the floods have not drowned me; and tho' I have passed through the fire, the flame has not (as yet) consumed me. My trust is in him whose way is in the sea, and whose path is in the great waters."

The year closed with a great Christmas meeting at Matthew's Chapel.

"While we were commemorating," writes Mead, "the Nativity, Crucifixion, Death and Resurrection of our blessed Saviour, Satan assembled his agents and fixed his powder guns around the meeting house; presently a screech-owl was thrown through the window and fell among the women; but we had too much faith to be scared by an owl or powder guns. It was a time of great grace among the Christians, while the devil and his subjects were made ashamed. On Tuesday the Lord was with us of a truth; the floor was strewed with shrieking sinners, and before the meeting ended six souls professed to be converted. The general cry is, 'never did we experience such a Christmas.'" He computed the year's results at 500 converted and 540 added to the Church, besides those who united with other denominations.

The Virginia Conference for 1798, met at Salem Chapel, Mecklenburg county, on the 9th of April, only

four months after the preceding Conference. Asbury has a bare allusion to it in his journal: "We began Conference on Monday and ended on Wednesday evening; we had three public days. The peace and union of the Conference were apparently great. I was assisted to attend."

Jesse Lee, who was present, gives a few items of interest. He opened the session with a sermon under which he says: "We had a most powerful, weeping, shouting time; the house seemed to be filled with the presence of God, and I could truly say it was a time of love to my soul. Bishop Asbury exhorted for some time, and the people were much melted under the word. Several new preachers engaged in the work, and we had a very good supply for all the circuits. Under the preaching next day "a bold and mighty charge was made upon the Philistines; sinners fell different ways, while loud cries for mercy sounded through the house."

Refreshed and strengthened by this baptism of the the Spirit, the faithful laborers cheerfully repaired to their fields of toil for another year.

The returns completed near the close of the year showed a small decrease in the membership in Virginia, notwithstanding the revivals which had occurred; 10,856 white, and 2,432 colored members were reported. But this was more than one-fifth of the entire membership of the Church, showing that the most fruitful soil of Methodism was in the Old Dominion. From careful statistics taken this year by Jesse Lee of all the local preachers in the Connection,

it appeared that 251, one-fourth of the whole number, were in Virginia. Many of these had been in the itinerancy, were powerful preachers, and greatly assisted the travelling ministers in extending the limits of Methodism.

The Conference for 1799 met at Jones' Chapel in Sussex county, on the 9th of April. Bishop Asbury was too feeble to preside, and his place was filled by Jesse Lee. "Upwards of fifty preachers had assembled; and they conducted their business in excellent temper and with great dispatch. Nine were received on trial, and seven were admitted into full connection; thirteen located, and one had 'ceased at once to work and live.'"

The members reported were 10,520 whites, and 2,312 colored; the decrease was 336 white, and 120 colored members. The feeble condition of Asbury excited the fears of his Virginia brethren, and they urged him to suspend all pulpit labor, at least until the meeting of the Baltimore Conference. He was willing to obey, "feeling himself utterly unable to preach a single sermon." By easy rides he passed through the lower counties, and reached Baltimore in time for the Conference on the first of May. The obituary list for this year contains the names of several faithful men, who, although some of them fell in other fields, deserve honorable mention as Virginians.

John N. Jones died in peace in the city of Charleston, "worn out with pain and a variety of weaknesses and afflictions of the body. He was full of zeal, a fervent preacher, and a successful laborer in the vineyard of the Lord. He commended himself

to all who knew him as a Christian and a Christian minister. At the time of his departure, he was "rapt up in the vision of God."

William Wilkerson died in the midst of his labors, in the Gloucester circuit. He had the appearance of a man who daily lived in communion with Christ. His preaching was greatly blessed in the conversion of souls, and in the building up of the Church. He was seized with a bilious fever which proved fatal in a few days. His death was as triumphant as his life had been holy. His last hours were spent in reciting his experience and labors as a Christian minister. Believing his sickness was unto death, "he manifested no desire for men or means," and joyfully welcomed the moment of release from the sorrows of earth.

James King was a native of Gloucester county. He had been nearly five years in the itinerancy. He had labored chiefly in Georgia and South Carolina. He possessed a good understanding, great zeal and a ready and pleasing utterance. As his life grew to a close, his love grew more fervent, and his power and success as a preacher greatly increased. The work of God gloriously revived under his ministry in several places. In Charleston, his last station, he labored with redoubled ardor until seized with the yellow fever, which soon closed his useful life. "He gave his life, his labors and his fortune to the Church of Christ and his brethren, and was a friend to religion and liberty."

The name of John Dickins disappears this year from the rolls of the militant Church. Though not

a Virginian, his abundant labors in the State, as a pioneer preacher, entitle him to something more than a passing notice. He was a native of England, born and educated in the city of London. He became a member of the Church in this country in 1774, and in 1777 was admitted as an itinerant preacher. He traveled extensively through Virginia and North Carolina during the Revolutionary war, and by his faithful preaching kept alive the spirit of religion in the Societies in that dark and trying period. Dickins was, perhaps, the most learned man among the early American Methodist preachers. Of the English language he was a perfect master. He understood the Latin and Greek, and was a proficient in Mathematics and other branches of science; his mind was quick and clear; he was a sound, close reasoner, and a "very plain, practical and pointed preacher." He was the first superintendent of the Book Concern, first in New York, and in Philadelphia from 1789 until his death. This responsible position he filled with efficiency. "His skill and fidelity as an editor, inspector and corrector of the press were exceedingly great, conducting the whole of his business with punctuality and integrity." Every year he sent out into every State in the Union many thousands of volumes on experimental and practical religion. He passed safely through two dreadful visitations of yellow fever, in the third he fell.

Shortly before his death he wrote to Asbury: "Perhaps I might have left the city, as most of my friends and brethren have done, but when I thought of such a thing my mind recurred to that Providence

which has done *so much* for me, a poor worm, that I was afraid of indulging any distrust, so I commit myself and family into the hands of God for life and for death."

In a letter to Asbury his wife gives a touching account of his last days: "On the first day of his sickness, about three hours after he was taken, he called me to his bedside. 'My dear,' said he, 'I am very ill, but I entreat you, in the most earnest manner, not to be the least discouraged or uneasy. Tell the children I beg of them not to be uneasy, for *Divine wisdom cannot err*. Glory be to God, I can rejoice in his will whether for life or death! I know all is well. Glory be to *Jesus!* I hang upon thee! Glory be to thee, O my God! I have made it my constant business, in my feeble manner, to please thee, and now, O God, thou dost comfort me!"—clasping his dear hands together, with tears running down his cheeks, crying, 'Glory be to God! Glory, glory be to God! My soul now enjoys such sweet communion with him that I would not give it for all the world. Glory be to Jesus! O, glory be to my God! I have not felt so much for seven years. Love him; trust him; praise him!'"

Thus died John Dickins. Asbury's estimate of his character is brief but full: "For piety, probity, profitable preaching, holy living, Christian education of his children, secret, closet prayer, I doubt whether his superior is to be found either in Europe or America." His brethren in Conference said of him:

"According to his time and opportunity, he was one of the greatest characters that ever graced the

pulpit, or adorned the society of ministers or Methodists. On his tomb might be engraved, or over his sleeping ashes with truth be pronounced, *Here lieth he, who, in the cause of God, never feared nor flattered man.*"

The Hon. Asbury Dickins, who for many years filled the office of Secretary to the Senate of the United States, was the son of this great and good man.

In the Minutes for this year, Richmond appears as a station. In 1793, "Richmond and Manchester" were returned as a separate pastoral charge, but the next year they were again included in the circuit work. The Capital of Virginia was an unkindly soil for Methodism in the early times of our Church. In 1796, twenty-four years after the planting of Methodism in the State, "there was no meeting house, and not twenty Methodists in the metropolis." Till the year of which we write, the city was included either in the Hanover or Williamsburg circuit, as was most convenient to the preachers.

Two families, the Parrotts and Allens, are supposed to have been the first Methodists that settled in Richmond. They had been Wesleyans in England, and came to this country soon after the close of the Revolutionary War. The family of Slades, who had been Free Will Baptists in England, also united with the Methodists after settling in the city. Mr. Parrott was not a member of the Society, but a warm friend to Methodism, and his house was the home of the early preachers whenever they came to the place. Of a visit to this family, Asbury says: "Who could be

kinder, and more pleased to see us, and make poor sickly travellers welcome than Mr. Parrott and his wife?"

Mrs. Parrott was a zealous and devoted woman, and threw all her influence in favor of religion. The residence of this worthy pair was on Main street, where the old Mansion House now stands.

The first place of worship used by the Methodists was the county Court House in the lower part of the city. This they continued to occupy until, during a brief revival, a charge was made against them of disturbing the quiet and good order of the neighborhood by their loud singing and shouting, when they were excluded from the house by order of the magistrates. For some time after this their preaching place was in an old field in the northwestern suburbs of the city. Here large crowds attended, and the singing and shouting were as vigorous as ever.

The zeal of Mrs. Parrott prompted her to fit up a sort of barn or store-house in the rear of her dwelling as a place of worship, and the out-door preaching was for a time given up.

Asbury speaks of preaching "to a few people in Mr. Parrott's store-house." In this humble place Asbury, Bruce, McKendree, and others preached the word, and comforted and encouraged the feeble band of believers. The increasing congregation soon filled the house to overflowing, and by permission of the magistrates the court house was again opened to the circuit preachers. Directly opposite the court house, on the corner of Main and 22nd street, in the old

house yet standing, lived a Methodist family named Jones. Here the little flock used to meet in class after preaching in the court house. This was also a famous place for prayer meetings. Rev. Edmund Lacy, who removed to the city from New Kent county, and Joshua West, both well known to the older Methodists, were active members of the infant Society.

The first efforts toward the erection of a church were made by Dr. Coke while on a visit to the city, probably about 1796. He set to work with his usual zeal, but was only partially successful. An attempt was made to increase the sum collected by investing it in a commercial house, but by some mismanagement the whole was lost.

No further efforts were made in this direction until the year 1799, under the administration of Thomas Lyell. Asbury appointed him from the Baltimore Conference to take charge of the feeble Society in Richmond. The selection was a happy one. Lyell was a young man of zeal, engaging in his manners, and very popular as a preacher. At the time of his arrival in Richmond, religion was at a low ebb; it was in fact very unfashionable. There were but two churches in the city—St. Johns, on Church Hill, at which the parish incumbent preached three times a year—at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, just often enough to prevent the loss of the glebe lands. The rector of the parish also preached once a month in the Capitol. The Baptists had a small church near the site of the Penitentiary.

On reaching the city and surveying the field, Lyell

saw that the Methodists must have a church. His plans were soon laid. He secured the privilege of preaching in the Capitol every Sunday afternoon. Many were attracted by the novelty of a regular religious service, and his congregations were soon crowded.

He grew instantly popular, became a general favorite, and found free access to all classes in the community. He bent all his energies to the work of building a church, subscriptions flowed in freely, and by the close of the year, he had finished and opened a neat and commodious house. This church was situated on the corner of Franklin and 19th streets; it has long since disappeared, but is still remembered as the old hive of Methodism in Richmond. Many yet linger among us who can recall glorious displays of divine power which they have witnessed within the sacred walls of that old church. And there are not a few who regret that the Methodists did not retain the spot as the site of the mother church of Methodism in Richmond.

We have no accounts of any extensive revival in the city under the labors of Lyell, but if he did nothing more, the building of a church and the gathering of a large congregation, showed that the spirit of religion pervaded the whole community. He had service in the new church three times on the Sabbath and once at night during the week. This was a strange thing in Richmond in those days. In the midst of his arduous labors, Lyell was well supported by several efficient local preachers. The Rev. James Coulling settled in the city in 1799, and entered into the work with great zeal and success.

He writes to a friend under date of this year: "I am settled in Richmond at present, and hard at work. I think the Lord has something for me to do here. I had a good meeting last night. The people in Gloucester are still alive and upon the increase. God is likewise reviving his work about fifteen miles from this place, in a more powerful manner than ever known before. Pray God that it may burn this way."

An incident in the history of this useful man is worthy of preservation. He was an Englishman by birth and in his youth was employed in a large establishment in the city of London. In the same house were several men who were members of Wesley's Society. It was usual to allow a recess of an hour each day for dinner. These men were in the habit of meeting every Friday at a certain room, and spending the hour for dinner in holding a class meeting. They estimated the cost of their dinners for that day (fast day) and regularly brought the amount as their contribution to the cause of God.

In this simple incident we see the secret power of Methodism as "Christianity in earnest."

A few years after the close of his labors in Richmond, Lyell located, subsequently joined the Protestant Episcopal Church, and became the rector of a church in the city of New York, the same over which Joseph Pillmoor presided for many years, after his withdrawal from the Wesleyan ranks.

The Virginia Conference for 1800 was held at the house of William Blunt, Isle of Wight county, on the 9th of April. From this year the records

of the Conferences for Virginia have been preserved, and we shall be able to place before the reader much curious and valuable information drawn directly from the authentic journals of the Conference. As a specimen we give the proceedings at this session, so far as they have been recorded.

"At the yearly Conference held at Blunt's, in the Isle of Wight, Virginia, for the year of our Lord 1800, appointed formerly to be held in Norfolk, but on account of the small-pox removed to Bro. Blunt's; the following persons were received on trial, and their recommendations filed and numbered—Wiley Jones, Samuel Meredith, James Hunt, Jesse Coe, Jesse Cole, John Cox, John Gamewell and William Davis.

N. B. Brother Daniel Ross, was recommended by several respectable members of the circuit where he resided, but as they had no intimation of his travelling at the Quarterly Meeting, his recommendation was not regularly through the Quarterly Conference; this Conference nevertheless received him upon a presumption that he will be regularly recommended hereafter. Brother Abner Henly, who formerly traveled in this Connection, but was located, is again received to travel in deacons' orders, wherein he formerly stood, before he located.

Brother Thomas Fletcher, received last year on trial, was thought by many of the preachers not to possess qualifications, or gifts to preach, and (they) urged he might be sent home, at least for a time, but after it was put to vote it was carried for him to travel, by a majority of one.

The following brethren were received into full Connection—Samuel Hooser, John Evans, Josiah Phillips, John Turner, Bannister Meddor, Joseph Dunn. When (it was) inquired who would travel again, John Ray answered by letter that he would travel till Christmas. John West promised by letter also to travel for three months, Joseph Moore by letter promisedto travel for one year. Pemberton Smith labors under difficulties, but is willing to travel another year. William Ormond has obliged himself by promise to travel only six months; also William Atwood's affairs will call for his attention for a few weeks, but hopes after then to be able to return to the work.

The preachers deficiencies for the past year were: $264,84.

Drawn from the chartered fund,	$80.00
Received from the different circuits,	41.54
	121.54

Total deficiency, 143.30.

The above $121.54 were divided among the preachers according to their wants as far as it could supply them.

The last Conference having voted (as is said) that an answer might be published to J. O'Kelly's publication signed Christicola, this Conference took that business under consideration, and voted unanimously that an answer to the above piece ought to be published, and have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke, Jesse Lee, Philip Bruce and William McKendree as a committee to prepare and publish an answer to the same."

Here the minutes close without date or signature. In reference to this session Asbury says: "We passed a close, comfortable Conference. We had great accounts of the work of God in the State of Delaware and also in Franklin circuit in Virginia. We had grace, but no gold; and we wanted $143 of silver to pay the just demands of the preachers to their sixty-four dollars per year."

Bishops and preachers suffered together in those days, and vied with each other in self-denial and sacrifices for the cause of Christ.

"One of my friends," writes Asbury, "wanted to borrow or beg £50 of me; he might as well have asked me for Peru. I showed him all the money I had in the world, about $12 and gave him $5; strange that neither my friends nor my enemies will believe that I neither have nor seek bags of money; well they shall believe by demonstration what I have ever been striving to prove—that I will live and die a poor man.

The members in Virginia were reported at 10,859 white, and 2,531 colored; showing a gain of 339 white, and 209 colored members. The old fields of Methodism still retained their numerical superiority. Gloucester reported 1,059; Greenville and Mecklenburg1,230; Portsmouth circuit 709; Bedford 687; Amherst, 510. Three stations were returned; Alexandria, 119; Norfolk and Portsmouth, 298, the majority being colored members; Richmond, 50.

The strength of Methodism lay in the free and open country.

The Virginia Conference was called this year to

mourn the loss of a most valuable man. William Early had fallen asleep in Jesus. He was a native of Bedford county. He labored zealously as a local preacher for several years, and was then received as an itinerant. He was full of zeal, a powerful, earnest and successful preacher. He was the honored instrument in the salvation of many souls. Seized with the yellow fever, while in New Berne, North Carolina, he refused to take his bed, and mounting his horse, rode off to his appointment. He had gone but a few miles, when, overcome by the fatal disease, he dismounted and threw himself under the shade of a tree by the road side. Here he was found by a gentleman, who kindly conveyed him to his house. He lingered a few days in great pain, and then his spirit was released, and ascended to the rest of the saints. "In the hour of his death he gave tokens of victory and happiness. In him the Church lost a faithful, laborious, and useful servant."

The route of Asbury after the close of the Conference lay through the lower counties of the State. In this journey he preached as often as his feeble state of health would permit. Pushing on to reach Baltimore in time for the opening of the General Conference, he came in company with McKendree and several other preachers to Urbanna, on the Rappahannock river. He writes: "There had been some notice given that there would be preaching here; the court-house doors were opened, but not one soul appeared; we paraded upon the green awhile, and then went to the ferry—wind and tide both ahead, a leaky boat, weak hands and oars, heavily

loaded in the bow with four horses, and one of them ready to leap out: they cried out to me to put back; after some hesitation, I thought we must go back, or to the bottom: after cruising two miles, brother McKendree and brother Snethen waited; brother Andrews and myself covered our retreat by riding twenty miles into Essex, and about sunset stopped at the widow Hundley's."

A few days after, they were successful in crossing the river, and soon reached Alexandria. In this tour Asbury had travelled more than five hundred miles in Virginia, and visited nineteen counties. On reaching Baltimore he writes: "I am persuaded that upon an exact measurement, I have travelled eleven hundred miles from the 10th of February, to the 27th of April; my horse is poor, and my carriage greatly racked."

The third regular General Conference assembled at Baltimore May 6, 1800, and closed on the 20th of the same month. "We had," says Asbury, "one hundred and sixteen members present."

Several important measures were adopted at which we shall merely glance.

The salaries of ministers were raised from sixty-four to eighty dollars per annum; the same sum was allowed to their wives. Each child of a travelling preacher was allowed fourteen dollars to the age of seven, and twenty-four dollars from seven to fourteen years of age.

An effort was made, at the instance of Dr. Coke, for the establishment of parsonages. The friends in each circuit were advised to purchase a suitable lot,

and build a preacher's house thereon, and supply it, at least, with heavy furniture.

A slight change was made in the form of trial for members. "The members before whom the delinquent was brought, were to judge of his innocence or guilt." If the preacher dissented from their decision he had the right of appeal to the quarterly meeting Conference.

The Conference rescinded the rule requiring preachers to give account of donations received from their friends. Up to this time no special provision had been made for the support of the Bishops; their few wants had usually been supplied by private donations. The General Conference ordered that each Annual Conference should pay its proportional part towards their support.

It was directed that the Annual Conferences should keep a correct record of all their proceedings, and send it up for the inspection of the General Conference.

It was resolved that no preacher should hereafter be eligible to a seat in the General Conference until he had travelled four years and been admitted into full connection.

The Bishops were authorized to ordain local deacons from the colored members, under certain conditions, but this rule was not inserted in the Discipline. The Southern preachers generally opposed it, and as it was not made public, a great many of the Methodists hardly knew that such a regulation existed.

The most important action of this Conference was the election of a Bishop. Asbury had come to the

determination to resign his office on account of his growing feebleness, and the great extent and constantly increasing demands of the work. He had written his resignation and was ready to present it to the Conference. His purpose was happily arrested by the prompt action of the body. They drew up resolutions in which they urged the Bishop to reconsider his purpose, and to consent to serve the Church as Superintendent as far as his strength and health would permit. He yielded to their wishes, and then the Conference determined to elect an additional Bishop. The question came up, whether the new Bishop should be merely an assistant to the elder incumbent, or be clothed with equal authority as a joint Superintendent. Two days were consumed in the discussion, when it was decided that he should possess equal "rank, rights, and powers with the other Bishops."

There were two prominent men before the Conferences, Richard Whatcoat and Jesse Lee. The choice was to fall on one or the other. The claims of both were almost equally balanced. Whatcoat had labored in America since 1784. He was a minister of large experience, earnest piety and strict integrity. Lee was known among the preachers "as a persevering, indefatigable man, of acknowledged integrity, and of uniform piety; who possessed zeal which was not easily damped, and an experience that could not be questioned." He had followed the fortunes of Methodism almost from its introduction into the country. He was perfectly familiar with all the details of business; clear in judgment, prompt in execution. His

manners were plain but affable, and he was highly gifted as a speaker. Besides, he had the prestige of being the great pioneer of Methodism in New England.

With their complete knowledge of these two men the Conference proceeded to the election. There was no choice on the first ballot. On the second there was a tie between them. On the third ballot Lee had fifty-five votes, and Whatcoat fifty-nine.

This General Conference was exceedingly pleasant and harmonious, and not without fruit in the conversion of souls. "I believe," says Jesse Lee, "we never had so good a General Conference before; we had the greatest speaking, and the greatest union of affections that we ever had on a like occasion." According to Asbury the preaching was as powerful as the speaking. He says: "The unction that attended the word was great—more than one hundred souls, at different times and places professed conversion during the sitting of Conference.

Here we may pause for a moment, and review the progress of Methodism in Virginia, from its entrance into the State to the close of the century.

Twenty-eight years had passed since Robert Williams preached his first sermon from the court-house steps at Norfolk. During this period Methodism had spread over the whole State. Thirty-five circuits had been formed, covering a vast territory, reaching from the shores of the Atlantic to the banks of the Ohio. A large portion of this great field lay in the wild and uncultivated region in the western part of the State, where the hardy pioneer preachers

were exposed to the perils of frontier life, while they followed the adventurous settlers into new and unopened lands. As the fruits of ministerial toil, nearly 15,000 members had been gathered into the fold of Christ; and although we have no guide to the number of preachers raised up among these thousands, we may well believe that the majority sprung from this, the most fruitful field of Methodism.

Many houses of worship had been built, Societies permanently organized, and all the machinery of a powerful and flourishing Church put into harmonious operation. The partial dissensions which had prevailed in certain localities, had purified, instead of corrupting and severing the Church; many who had been alienated for a time by false representations, had seen the error of their way, and gladly they returned to the fold they had forsaken—and Methodism, purified by the fires of persecution, started on her career at the beginning of the new century with fresh vigor and courage.

Never, since Apostolic days, had so much been accomplished in so brief a period, and with means, in a human point of view, so disproportionate to the work proposed. The doctrines presented were new and strange to the masses in every part of the land; the preachers were without human learning or human influence; they were plain men, with nothing to recommend them but the purity of their lives, the Scriptural character of their doctrines, and the zeal and fervor of their preaching. The cloud of war had gathered over the land in the infancy of the

Church. For a while she was under this cloud, her light obscured, but not extinguished. Many preachers fled from the country, or ceased to itinerate. The chosen leader of the band lay concealed, now in the house of a friend, and now, as danger came near, in the deep forests, or almost pathless swamps, till these calamities were over past. But still in his heart faith, and hope, and courage remained. God was the refuge of his saints. He directed the storm, and rode upon the wings of the tempest. The dark clouds rolled away, the light broke forth once more, and Methodism girded herself for her appointed work. In her ranks at the close of the century stood 60,000 members, led on in the paths of the Lord by more than 1,000 faithful travelling and local preachers; all the fruits of thirty years' toil in the American field. Well may we exclaim in astonishment and gratitude: "What hath God wrought!" Nobly did our fathers cultivate the fields that Providence opened before them, and rich and plenteous the harvests they gathered for the garner of heaven. May we, their sons, be faithful to their doctrines, their principles, and their holy example; so shall we be worthy to stand with them in the great day when the Master shall say: "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

CHAPTER XI.

Revival of 1801—Conference at Dromgoole's Chapel—John Tolleson—Thomas Logan Douglass—Jesse Lee labors in Virginia—Conference of 1802—Revival scenes—Progress of the work in the Valley—General Daniel Morgan—A Methodist dinner party—Conference of 1803—John C. Ballew—Elizabeth Dandridge Ballew—First Camp-meetings in Virginia—Account of their origin—"The Jerks," and other remarkable exercises—Popularity of Camp-meetings—Description of the ground and exercises.

THE year 1801 was ushered in with revivals. The good work of grace at the General Conference was only like a few prelusive drops before the descending shower. On the adjournment of that body the preachers bore away with them to all parts of the work the flame of divine love. At the Duck Creek Conference, held in Delaware, two weeks after the General Conference, there was a most extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit. Many persons, fresh from the revival at Baltimore, attended this meeting. The business of the session was conducted in a private house, while the church, and even the houses of the neighbors, were filled with eager crowds listening to the word of life. The meetings were continued every day and night for a week. "Some of the people," says Jesse Lee, "when they were almost worn out, would go home in the evening or

at midnight, and take a little sleep, and then as soon as they awoke, they would hurry off to meeting again, at any hour of the night." On one occasion the exercises continued without intermission for forty-five hours—the people going off in companies to procure food and rest, and then returning to relieve those who remained to labor for souls. Not less than one hundred and fifty were converted during the meeting."

Over the whole field of Methodism, from Canada to Georgia, and from Delaware to Kentucky, the revival influence extended. The churches in Virginia shared largely in this gracious visitation. In his annual journey through the State, southward, Asbury was cheered by the tidings that reached him of the spread of the good work. From New London, in Campbell county, he writes: "Good news from the South District of Virginia, Brother Jackson writes, 'two hundred souls have been converted this last quarter; there is a revival in all the circuits but two, and great union among the preachers and people.'"

The Virginia Conference for 1801, began at Dromgoole's chapel in Brunswick, on the 9th of April. We present extracts from the record.

"The following persons were admitted on trial, being recommended according to the order of our Church:

Jesse Coe, Willie Jones, Banks Meecham Burrows, Jacob Watson, James Chappel, Thomas L. Douglass, and David Hume.

William Hubbard was recommended; objections were brought against him on account of his not hav-

ing exercised his gifts, and being in debt; he was admitted by a small majority. Thomas Fletcher and John Ellis have both traveled two years; their case was considered and it was determined that they should remain on trial.

Bannister Meador, in deacons' orders, entered located, but no certificate, not having complied with the slave rule.

Received of Stephen Davis' gifts $124,76 by the hands of Ira Ellis. Received of the gifts of Captain G. Hill, $75 on Brother Parham's order.

Isaac Lunsford was re-admitted. Francis Poythress not attending Conference, and it being understood that he wished to go to Kentucky Conference, he has a permission or a dispensation, to next Conference in the West."

These are the only items of special interest contained in the Minutes; they have no signature.

Asbury gives but a line or two in reference to this Conference. "We had a press of business, but were peaceable and expeditious. Brother Lee preached on Saturday. I held forth on Sunday morning to an unwieldy congregation in-doors, whilst William Ormond preached out of doors, and the poor blacks had their devotions behind the house."

Death had spared all the Virginia preachers, save one faithful man. James Tolleson had fallen at his post full of honors and full of grace. He was born in South Carolina. Ten years he had been in the field, during which time he had preached the gospel from Georgia to New York, he had fine gifts and an excellent understanding. His uniform piety and

amiable manners made him a great favorite with the preachers and people. He died at Portsmouth, after a lingering illness, of yellow fever. In his last hours he manifested great resignation, and left the clearest testimony that his spirit had entered the paradise of God. He willed all his property to the Church, and even sent his clothes to the Conference to be distributed among the preachers.

The membership in Virginia was reported at 11,072 whites, and 2,578 colored; the whole increase was 260.

Among those who were received on trial at this Conference, stands the name of one who rose to high position in the ranks of the itinerancy: Thomas Logan Douglass is no ordinary name in the annals of American Methodism.

His first circuit was Hanover, as the junior colleague of William Davis and Daniel Ross. He was quite a young man, and his appearance at this period has been described to us by the venerable Philip Courteney who knew him long and intimately. Mr. Courteney was spending the day at the house of Mr. Lacy, a well-known and zealous Methodist. In the afternoon he observed a gentleman riding toward the house. He stopped at the gate and dismounted. He was about five feet six inches in height. On his head he wore a broad brimmed, black wool hat; his coat was of light blue cloth, cut scant after the shad style; his vest was of olive colored velvet with long skirts; he wore short breeches of the same material and color, not more than two spans in length, his legs being very short. His costume was completed by the

addition of tight fitting deep blue yarn stockings, shoes and buckles. It was Quarterly Meeting occasion in Richmond, and Douglass was invited to preach by Rev. Alexander M'Cain, the stationed preacher. His text was Ezekiel's vision of the waters. After service they retired to the house of a friend, where Douglass asked M'Cain how he liked his exposition of the passage; the latter replied: "Very well, but I could have waded where you had to swim."

M'Cain was upwards of six feet high, but there was perhaps, a double meaning to the remark. Douglass preached again to the satisfaction of the people, who considered him a young man of much promise. He remained in the Virginia Conference twelve years, increasing in his influence and usefulness, and was then transferred to the Tennessee Conference, where he maintained, until the day of his death, the position of a chosen leader among the valiant band of itinerants. No man has left a purer or more valuable legacy to the Church at whose altars he ministered more than forty years, than Thomas Logan Douglass.

In Virginia and Tennessee his name is as precious ointment poured forth. In the resurrection thousands will arise and claim him as their spiritual father.

The Virginia Conference was favored this year with the labors of Jesse Lee in one of the largest and most important districts. Having traversed the entire field of Methodist operations for several years, he now came home to do the work of an evangelist in a narrower, but hardly less laborious sphere. He was appointed to the Norfolk District.

"It had nine appointments and eighteen preachers,

and extended in length from Norfolk nearly to Lynchburg; and in width embraced the country lying between the James and Roanoke Rivers, and their outlets to the ocean."

He entered upon the work in this extensive field with his characteristic zeal. He attended in one year "twenty-five Quarterly Meetings, was present at twenty-seven love feasts, and preached two hundred and ninety-four sermons." In addition to the regular Quarterly Meeting appointments, he made it a rule "to preach at every regular preaching place in the bounds of his district at least once a year."

While he was a most earnest and devoted minister of Christ, joyful in his experience, and full of faith and the Holy Ghost, "he possessed a keen sense of the ridiculous," and few men could rebuke improprieties more effectually, and at the same time give less ground for complaint on the part of the offenders.

Going into the pulpit on one occasion, he found the men and women violating the old Methodist rule by sitting together; supposing them to be ignorant of the rule, he stated it, and requested the gentlemen to take seats on their own side of the house. All but two or three at once complied; he repeated the request, when all but one retired. The request was again repeated, but the offender kept his seat. "Leaning down upon the desk, and fixing his penetrating eyes upon the offender for a moment, and then raising himself erect, and looking with an arch smile over the congregation, Lee drawled out:

"Well, brethren, I asked the *gentlemen* to retire from these seats, and *they* did so. But it seems *that*

man is determined not to move. We must therefore serve him as the little boys say when a marble slips from their fingers—let him go for *slippance.*"

The offender soon slipped out of sight. On another occasion he discovered a number of his hearers asleep in the house, while the groups in the yard disturbed him by their loud talking.

"Pausing long enough for the absence of the sound to startle the sleepers, he raised his voice and cried out: "I'll thank the people in the yard not to talk so loud; they'll wake up the people in the house."

The remainder of that sermon was delivered to a silent, wakeful and attentive audience."

Salem Chapel, Mecklenburg county, was the seat of the Conference for 1802; it began on the first of March. The Minutes are as usual very meagre.

"David B. Mintz, James Smith, and William Johnson, were duly recommended according to the order of the Church. Robert Carter offered himself to trial in the itinerant plan, but through the neglect of the Presiding Elder his recommendation was not filled up according to rule. However, he was received by the vote of the Conference.

Brother Wiley Jones was accused of marrying contrary to the rule and order of the Church, but the case being thought doubtful, he was stripped of his official character, and considered as a member in connection.

The preachers' annual collection,	$79.38
Collected from the circuits,	35.45
	114.83

This money was equally divided among the preachers who were deficient in their quarterage.

The fathers maintained a close over-sight of all the preachers, as these early records show. A candidate for deacons' orders failed to be elected "for the present on account of his small abilities," the election of another was delayed "on account of an impediment in his delivery." A member was charged with neglecting his appointments and with certain indiscretions—"the committee appointed to hear the accusations thought him culpable, and directed that one of the Bishops should reprove him before the Conference, which was done."

Asbury tells us more about this Conference than is usual with him. "We began and held close Conference four days; and had preaching each day. Bruce, Lee, Jackson, and Snethen, were our speakers; and there was a shaking among the people. Seven Deacons and one Elder were ordained. I was well pleased with the stations as far as they went; but Portsmouth, Bertie, Roanoke, Haw River, Guilford, and Salisbury should each have had an additional preacher, if we had them; yea, Petersburg, Williamsburg, Hanover and Richmond also; but the Lord hath not sent them, and we cannot make them. There was great strictness observed in the examination of the preachers' characters; some were reproved before the Conference for their lightness, and other follies." The session was attended with a gracious revival; twenty persons were converted, and the saving influence of this good work continued long after the Conference closed.

The numbers in Society are not given in the Minutes for this year by Conferences, but simply by circuits and stations. There was, however, a considerable increase in Virginia, as may be supposed by the unusually large gain of more than 13,000 in the entire work.

In all the immense territory of Methodism, not one preacher had fallen during the year. In all the Conferences the response to the question, "*Who have died this year?*" was, "*None.*" Fredericksburg was this year placed on the Minutes as a new circuit.

The year following this Conference was greatly fruitful throughout the bounds of the Church. The circuits in Virginia shared largely in the great revival which was rolling like a wave of fire over the land. In the southern portion of the State, where the churches had felt the severest effects of division and discord, the Lord freely poured out his Spirit, and Zion raised her drooping head. The bands of love were strengthened among the older Christians, and many sinners were brought to feel the saving power of the gospel.

At Mabry's Chapel, in Greensville, there was a glorious manifestation of the Spirit. Jesse Lee, who conducted the meeting, has left an account of the stirring scenes. "The place was awful indeed. After awhile, one proclaimed aloud that God had converted her soul. Another spoke out and said, 'God had reached a young man's heart.' One of the preachers called to one of the sisters, saying, 'Sister, your daughter has promised that she will set out for heaven.' Thus they continued for a considerable time."

He had another powerful Quarterly Meeting at Jones' Chapel, in Sussex. He thus describes the scenes of the Sabbath: "The meeting continued till sunsetting, in which time it was said sixteen souls were converted. The work was also among the blacks. About sundown a lad was converted, who was the last, there being but few people in the meeting-house. One of the preachers shouted aloud, and praised God that the Christians had taken the field, and kept the ground, for there was not a sinner left. Another preacher asked some of them to look out of doors, and see if they could not find one more sinner, for he thought if they could find another, he would be converted. But there was not another unconverted sinner to be found at the meeting-house. So they praised God together and returned home. Most of those who were converted were the children of Methodist parents, though some of their parents had been dead for many years."

In Sussex circuit more than one hundred were converted in six weeks. The work of revival was not confined to this portion of the State; in every district and in almost every circuit the churches were quickened and sinners converted. On the Eastern Shore a general revival was in progress. Norfolk, Portsmouth, and the adjacent country shared largely in the blessed work. In Rockingham, at a meeting which continued for nine days, so great was the excitement that almost all secular business was suspended and the people flocked in crowds to the house of God. Some reminiscences of this meeting have been preserved by the Rev. Joseph Travis, who was an

eye-witness of the scenes described. In his tour through the Valley, Bishop Asbury visited Harrisonburg in company with Nicholas Snethen and Enoch George. The preaching of these holy men was in demonstration of the Spirit and in power. Under the pathetic appeals of George, "the flinty hearts were broken in pieces, the iceberg professors melted into tears, while sinners were made to quake and tremble."

The Bishop and his companions passed on their way, but the meeting was continued by Leonard Cassel, one of the circuit preachers, assisted by the local brethren. While Cassel was preaching, "about midway the sermon, quick as lightning from heaven, the power and presence of the great Head of the Church was manifested in the midst. Ah! it was truly glorious—sinners crying for mercy, mercy—happy Christians shouting, luke-warm professors weeping and groaning—those who had been at variance, in each others' arms weeping, and mutually begging each others' pardon, and promising hereafter to live in peace, and pray for one another." The exercises lasted till midnight. Next day they met again, and the displays of Divine power were still more wonderful. For nine days and nights the work went on with increasing power and success.

"Never did I witness before, nor have I since," says the narrator, "such displays of Divine power. Profane sinners, downright skeptics, and God-defying wretches, would enter the church with their sarcastic grins, and countenances telling out upon them their rage and hellish malice at the work going on, and in less than ten minutes the very vilest of all such would

be stricken to the floor, as if shot by a deadly arrow, and for an hour or so, remain speechless, breathless, pulseless, and, to all appearance, dead—then, afterwards, with a heavenly smile, look up, stand up, and shout aloud, "Glory, glory to God! my soul is converted, and I am happy." Many became afraid to enter the church; and at a tavern one day it was asked by the company who would venture to go in and bring back the news of what was going on, when a Mr. Mackey proposed himself, as he was not afraid. I knew this young man well—he was amiable, but very wild and heedless about religion. I noticed him when he came in. He began to count the number of persons then down on the floor. He proceeded as far probably as from one to six in counting, when down he came. He lay for about an hour. I remained close by him, and when he arose he commenced shouting, "Glory to God!" and taking my hand, he exclaimed, "Oh! if I had known the power of God, I should not have resisted it, as I have done."

One of the greatest triumphs of grace at this meeting was in the case of a young man of talents, birth, and education, but an avowed infidel. "He came into the church defying any power, human or Divine, to make a fool of him; when, astonishing to relate, within ten minutes, yonder he lies prostrate on the floor. Breathless and pulseless, he lay for an hour or more, and when he arose it was tremendiously glorious. He afterwards became a minister."

Father Travis believed that this great work was in answer to the fervent prayers of the pious class lead-

er. The Church in Harrisonburg had been in a deplorably lukewarm condition, "and prejudice abounded much more than the grace of God."

"I can never forget," he writes, "the night I attended my class, when the leader sang and prayed, unfolded his class-paper, burst into a flood of tears, and with a half-choked utterance, said: 'Brethren, go home, I cannot meet you in class to-night.' He picked up his hat and walked out; in slow procession the rest of us followed. On my way home, passing by the stable of the leader, I heard a groan, the sound being that of a human being. I approached, and it being a moonlight night, on looking in I saw the leader, James Burgess, upon his knees begging God to have mercy upon the Church. Oh, that we had more such leaders in this day as he then was!"

The holy flame spread through the Valley, and across the mountains to the counties lying along the Potomac. The venerable James Quinn, who labored this year on the Winchester circuit, has left some interesting reminiscences of that part of the work. "The territory of three large counties," he says, "was embraced in our bounds; namely, Frederick, Berkeley, and Jefferson; and we must have rode near four hundred miles in reaching all the appointments." Within these bounds he found a number of excellent and talented local preachers. "In Winchester Enoch, (afterward Bishop,) George, having located, was engaged in school teaching. S. G. Roszell, having located, was engaged in the same business. Near the same place was located, on a

farm, Richard Swift. Between Shepherdstown and Charlestown, Samuel Welch. In the vicinity of Stevensburg there were Elisha Phelps, William M'Dowell, and Lewis Chastain. These had all been successful and popular travelling preachers, and were considered men of first-rate talents." While on this circuit he had the privilege of consoling the last moments of an illustrious patriot and warrior.

"Permit me," he writes, "to mention my visit, in company with and by the request of brother G. Reed, to the sick-room of General Daniel Morgan, that terrible thunder-bolt of war, who, with his companions, made the British lion quail. But the thunder and din of war had ceased, and the hero had retired to wear in private life the fading laurels accorded to him by a nation. Death, who had passed him in the battle-field, had not lost sight of him, and now he must go the way whence he shall never return. I was introduced to him in my ministerial character by Mr. Reed. He reached out his hand, and looking me full in the face, said: 'O, sir, I am glad you have come to see me, and I hope you will pray for me; for I am a great sinner, about to die; and I feel that I am not prepared to meet my God.' I ventured to show him the way of salvation by faith in him who suffered the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God—then prayed with him. He wept much, and I left him bathed in tears. Never did I see tears flow more copiously from man, woman, or child. Ah, thought I, how little can the honors or riches of the world do for poor man when death comes! When I came round again death had done its work; the

body had been interred with the honors of war, and the spirit had gone to God who gave it. Rev. Mr. Hill, Presbyterian minister, who continued his visits to the last, believed there was some ground of hope in his death. O, how hazardous to defer repentance till stretched upon the bed of death!"

Mr. Quinn has drawn the picture of a scene that cannot fail to interest the reader. We are permitted to see the venerable Asbury spending a pleasant day in the midst of a Christian family, surrounded by a number of his chosen friends.

"An arrangement was made for the Bishop to rest a day or two at the house of his warm-hearted friend, Rev. Elisha Phelps, in the vicinity of Stevensburg, where he would receive his friends. Accordingly, on Tuesday, August 24, at an early hour, before the heat of the day came on, a most interesting company convened at the lovely country residence, where true Virginia hospitality, in old style, stood ready to receive them with smiling welcome. As soon as the company were seated in the not splendid, but neatly arranged parlor, in order that all things might be sanctified by the word of God and prayer, the Bishop, in his usually laconic and comprehensive style, addressed the throne of grace. Although the prayer was short, it seemed to take in all for which man or minister should pray. The prayer concluded, the company resumed their seats; and what then? Light chit-chat, mixed with peals of laughter, in which all persons talk and no one hears? No, no; it was 'the feast of reason and the flow of soul,' in a free flow of conversation

on a variety of interesting topics, chiefly of a moral and religious character. The state of the old world, in religion and politics, occupied a part of the time. The revolutions in Europe, the shaking of thrones, the fulfilment of prophecy, the overthrow of the beast and the false prophet; Newton, Faber, Bengelius, and Wesley, on the fulfilment of prophecy; infidelity in Europe and America; the spread of the gospel, the rolling of the stone cut out of the mountains, the glorious 1836, which, according to some, was to usher in the glories of the millennium; these, together with the state of affairs in our own America, God maintaining his own cause, making bare his arm, pouring out his Spirit gloriously on different branches of his Church, etc., entered largely into the social entertainment of that pleasant day.

And now, if I could, I would most cheerfully give the reader a minute description of that social band. I fear a failure, but will try. Well, then, here were our host and hostess, Rev. E. Phelps and wife. He had been a travelling preacher of respectable talents. His heart was still warm in the cause, though he had retired from the work. His open, good-natured countenance, told his guests that they were welcome, and that was enough. His deeply pious lady, somewhat in advance of him in years, was of olden style, a sensible, well-informed woman, without the tinsel and flippery of modern etiquette. Her orderly movements, and countenance beaming with good nature, said to her friends, Feel yourselves welcome.

Then there was Mr. Asbury, in better health than usual, and in fine spirits; I never saw him in a more

cheerful and pleasant mood; for the Lord was then gloriously pouring out his Spirit in many places, and many souls were coming home to God; and this always cheered the heart of the good man.

Well, that tall, swarthy Southerner, of ministerial garb and mein—who was that? That was Rev. Philip Bruce, a bachelor. He brought good news from the south of Virginia. His district was all in a flame.

Well, that somewhat robust, fine looking gentleman, with black band, in Virginia cotton homespun, and that sickly looking lady near him, who were they? That was Rev. Samuel Mitchell, of Botetourt, Virginia. He was a whole-souled Virginian, who, by word and deed, carried out the first principles of the doctrine contained in the Declaration of American Independence. His heart was all on fire. The news of the great work of God in west Tennessee and Kentucky has just come to hand by private letters. In his amiable lady we saw and admired the power and loveliness of blessed Christianity, fortifying the mind and cheering the heart, while sweet resignation sat smiling at the approach of death. A few months more, and she slept in Jesus, and all was well.

But there is still another interesting figure, somewhat robust, but not corpulent, a fine manly face, and smiling countenance. Well, that was Dr. J. Tildon, a local preacher; had been a captain in the Revolution; held a certificate of membership in the Cincinnati, with Washington's signature as Presi-

dent of the Society. He was interesting in conversation.

That aged lady in black? That was Dr. T.'s mother. She had lived more than seventy years. She was waiting her change, and repining for heaven.

Here also was Dr. William M'Dowell, late of Chilicothe, at that time in the prime of life, a man of most dignified appearance; his raven locks hanging in ringlets, and beginning to be sprinkled with gray; and the fine Irish bloom yet glowing on his cheek. He had been a successful travelling preacher, but had retired from the field of toil and privation. This was often a subject of regret to him. His amiable wife was also present, all vivacity of body and mind; she had a smiling, talking eye, and when she spoke it was with wisdom; what she said was worth attention and memory.

And this ruddy Englishman, who looked as if he was always in a good humor, with himself and every body else; and often laughed heartily, but not at his own wit? That was brother Mason, the watchmaker, quite gentlemanly in his manners. And that meek, neat lady of Quaker appearance? That was sister Mason. In her we saw a pattern of neatness and piety.

Here too was the pious widow of Rev. B. Talbot. While her countenance well expressed the meekness and sweetness of resignation, it seemed to say, 'Pity me, pity me, O ye, my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me!' Sympathies were well expressed in those kind and gentle attentions which are

calculated to sooth and cheer the bereaved heart, and no gloom was cast over the company.

And now I must make you acquainted with my colleague, the Rev. Edward Matthews, a Welshman, and not long from his native land, with the fire, manners, and dialect of his country—a pleasant and companionable man, and zealous in the cause of God. He was modest and reserved, but Mr. Asbury and the Virginians led him out and made him feel at home.

But it is proper that I should notice one other circumstance, which added much to the religious sociabilities of the day: it was music—sweet, spirit-stirring music. It charmed the ear, and warmed the heart. We had six or eight *intellectual* musical instruments in our company, which the Lord himself had strung and tuned. The Methodists used only such in that day. With these we occasionally made melody in our hearts to the Lord. In this exercise Dr. M'Dowell took the lead, for he had the best instrument in the company, and could use it with skill. He sounded the key-note, all the rest chiming. O, it was heart-warming, soul-animating.

The writer of this reminiscence was also one of the company. But he was the junior of all present; at that time a student of the fourth year in the Methodist Theological Seminary, which had its establishment in all the United States, and a few branches in the Western wilds; and a backwoodsman withal; it behooved him therefore to be swift to hear, and slow to speak. But being now in 'good company,' he resolved to take a lesson or two on good behavior

and Christian politeness, and also to gather a few good thoughts on divinity; for in those days he was all eye and ear, and constantly on the look out; he was studying men as well as a few good books.

In due time we were summoned to the dining-room. Upon approaching the table, the Bishop tuned his musical powers—a deep-toned, yet mellow bass, to

> "Be present at our table, Lord,
> Be here and and every Where adored;
> Thy people bless, and grant that we
> May feast in Paradise with Thee."

The blessing asked, and all were seated—old Virginia for all the world; and for once we partook of food; ate our bread with singleness of heart. The decanters, with wine or stronger drink, were neither on the table nor sideboard, but we had a fresh supply of new wine just from the Kingdom. From the dining-room we returned to the parlor, and again united our musical powers in one of the songs of Zion, then bowed before the sprinkled throne, and found access, by one Spirit, through the one and only Mediator to the God of all consolation. The afternoon passed pleasantly and profitably away on subjects of conversation. We had just entered the nineteenth century. Here were those who had witnessed many of the scenes of more than half of the eighteenth century; the prophecies which, in whole or in part, in the old and in the new world, had been fulfilled, and what would probably take place in the fulfilment of prophecy during the century on which we had just entered. Glorious things were anticipated, and we were ready to think that the beast and

the false prophet would both be overthrown, and Satan bound and imprisoned. But the day was now far spent, the shadows were lengthening, and the time for parting came, when all met in the parlor, and tuned our well-strung instruments in lofty strains to

> "The Lord into his garden came,
> The spices yield a rich perfume,
> The lilies grow and thrive," etc.,

and then the parting prayer and benediction by Mr. Asbury. O, it was a season not soon to be forgotten. It savored of heaven."

Such is the picture of a Methodist dinner-party in the olden time. All who gathered around that happy board have long since met and feasted together in the presence of the Lamb.

It appears to be uncertain whether the Conference for 1803 was held in Virginia or North Carolina. The Journal simply states that it was "held at Olive Branch Meeting House, and began on the first of March." The following persons were received on trial: John Gibbons, Edmund Henly, John C. Ballew, James Taylor, and William Wright. "A recommendation in favor of Richard Lattimore, of Norfolk, was presented, but owing to a general report of the loss of a relation of his at sea, it was thought best to refer him to the Presiding Elder, so that if the above report should prove groundless, and he should travel this year, he shall be considered on trial from this Conference."

The demand for laborers was so urgent in those early days that the Conference sometimes departed from the usual custom, and received persons on trial

who had not been regularly recommended by a Quarterly Conference. At this session the "Conference dispensed with the form," and received an applicant on the "recommendation of Philip Bruce and other members." In reference to the vexing question of slavery, we find the following: "On motion of William Ormond, a committee of three, viz: W. Ormond, Philip Bruce, and Joseph Moore, was appointed to receive, during the course of the year, from the preachers who have the charge of the different circuits, information of all weighty and singular cases, relative to the expulsion of members for slavery, and to prepare a remonstrance and petition relative to the present rule on that subject, which is to be brought to the next Virginia Conference, and then and there to be examined, and prepared to be laid before the next General Conference."

The deficiences of the preachers amounted to $305.50. To meet this the following sums were reported:

"By preacher's fund,	$76 00
"marriage money,*	3 25
"the circuits,	57 17
"chartered fund,	90 00
"S. Davis' legacy,	56 00
	$282 42
Remaining deficit,	23 08

Here the Journal closes without signature.

Of this Conference, under date of Saturday, March 5, Asbury writes: "Ended our most amicable Con-

*Marriage fees reported as required by the rule of Conference.

ference which began on Tuesday. We had preaching each day by M'Cain, Hull, Lee, Snethen, and myself on the last day. We ordained the travelling and local Deacons on Friday, and the Elders on Saturday."

The Sunday following was a day of gracious visitation to preachers and people. "Our stand," says Asbury, "was in the woods; our congregation consisted of about two thousand souls. I was exceedingly pleased with our Conference love-feast—with its order, solemnity, and life—the testimonies borne appeared to be all given under the immediate impulse of the Spirit of God, both in ministers and people." Whatcoat was present, but being ill, the whole burthen of the Conference fell on Asbury.

The returns of members showed the gracious fruits of the revivals which had spread over the Conference; 13,099 whites, and 3,794 colored members were reported in the bounds of the Conference; the increase for the two years preceding was more than 3,000; the whole gain in Virginia was much greater, as a large portion of the State was embraced in the Baltimore Conference. It would hardly be an overestimate to place the increase in the entire State at more than 5,000 souls.

Among the preachers received on trial this year there was one who deserves notice as one of the most useful men in the Virginia Conference.

John C. Ballew was this year enrolled in the itinerant ranks. Sixty years ago, the Catawba country in North Carolina was an almost unreclaimed wilderness. The land was exceedingly fertile, producing

in abundance every thing needed by the hardy pioneers that settled it. The tribes of the Catawba, Cherokee, and Creek Indians, were near by, and looked with jealous eyes on the encroachment of the whites. The forests were full of game, and hunting was a favorite pursuit with all classes. The trusty rifle was a constant companion of almost every man, and was used with deadly effect against the prowling wild beast, or the cunning savage.

In this wild region Methodism was planted at an early date. The Methodist preacher hunted up the hardy settlers in their forest homes, and proclaimed the gospel to groups of wondering hearers. One of these zealous men appointed a woods-meeting at which the inhabitants gathered from miles around. A revival broke out, and a large number professed religion. Among the converts was young Ballew. Not long after his conversion he felt that he ought to preach. But he was almost wholly without education; he could scarcely read without spelling his way through the words. He was in a great measure ignorant of Methodism. He knew its doctrines, and he cordially embraced them. He knew it had an itinerating ministry. He felt that he must become a travelling preacher; but how or where to begin he knew not. At length, in the spring of 1803, he learned that Bishop Asbury would hold a Conference in Virginia within a few weeks. He at once made up his mind to go and see what sort of a thing a Conference was, and if on inspection he liked it, he determined to join. He bought an Indian pony, saddle, and saddle-bags, took a few clothes, bade

adieu to his friends, and set off. Late in the day, probably a week after leaving home, he reached the place of his destination, bespattered with mud from head to foot, and immediately began to enquire for the Conference. He received directions and rode up to the place of meeting. Conference was in session, but a few preachers were standing about the door. Ballew, seated on his horse, saluted them in backwoods style, told them his name, where he was from, and what object had brought him to the place. One of the preachers inquired whether he had received a recommendation from his class.

"No," said he; "I didn't know that was necessary."

"Have you letters from the preacher in charge of your circuit?"

"No, sir," I brought no letters from anybody. I think," he added, "you have a Bishop in your Conference?"

"Yes; Bishop Asbury is in attendance."

"Well, I should like to see *him*."

He had an interview with Asbury, told him his simple story, and at once touched the old man's heart; he treated him kindly, and received him on trial. On his first circuit he preached but poorly; the people were disappointed and dissatisfied, and he became greatly discouraged. His colleague strove to cheer and encourage him, but still his spirit was clouded and unhappy. At one appointment he preached so wretchedly, that at the close of the services not a person in the house invited him to dinner. When he came out of the church there was nobody

in the yard but a solitary negro. Ballew went to his horse with a heavy heart. The negro now approached him, and with a polite salutation, said: "Massa, go home wid me; my massa couldn't come to meeting to-day; he always glad to see de preachers; he wouldn't like for you to pass him by."

"Who is your master?" said Ballew.

"John Murphy is my master, sir; he belongs to dis class, and I can tell you, if you go dar, you'll be at home; he's mighty fond of de preachers."

"Well, my boy, I'll go with you."

He went, met with a warm reception, and found Joe's "massa" all he had represented him to be.

At his next appointment at this place he preached well, everybody was pleased, and at the close of the services he had many pressing invitations. He declined them all, and called out, "Where is Joe? I intend to go with Joe; he invited me to his master's house when I was here before, and I will go with no one but him to-day." They felt the rebuke, and the lesson was not lost.

His character was marked by a few innocent excentricities. Sometimes when he had carefully prepared a sermon, and on reaching his appointment, found a small congregation, he would change his mind and extemporize a discourse, saying he had expected a large congregation, and intended to preach them a great sermon; but as there was only a handful, he should not shoot a buck-load at snow-birds. He was a man of order, and allowed no rudeness or impropriety at his meetings.

In the severe school of the itinerancy he rapidly

improved, and became a powerful and successful preacher. Physically, he was made to endure hardships. His frame was stout, muscular, and compact. His height was about five feet nine inches; his head was large and well formed, his face square, forehead broad, and his features well defined. He was truly a man of iron, and would attract the notice of a stranger as soon as his eye fell upon him. There was that about his whole demeanor and appearance which indicated great energy and originality of character. His mode of speaking was such as sets all imitation at defiance. His voice was deep and strong; the words fell from his lips separately and with emphatic distinctness, each one making its own impression on the mind of the listener. He was a close, clear thinker, and when warmed with his subject, a powerful reasoner. He indulged but little in fancy; was always forcible, and often eloquent. He had a high sense of moral right, a mind of extraordinary firmness, that reached its conclusions slowly, and maintained them with much vigor and force of argument.

An anecdote has been related of him which illustrates the candor of the man. In the days of his full strength a camp-meeting was held, probably in Fluvanna or Albemarle, at which, on Sunday, there was an immense concourse of people. A number of distinguished men were present, among them James Madison, and perhaps Thomas Jefferson. The ablest preachers were of course selected for the Sabbath appointments. A preacher of decided talents held forth at 8 o'clock; at 11 Thomas L. Douglass

preached a powerful sermon, which made a profound impression on the vast audience; at 3 Ballew took the stand, and began a discourse that rose in power and grandeur, till the whole assembly were spell-bound. The application was overwhelming—the great men declared they had never heard such a sermon before. When he had concluded, he paused a moment and looked over the congregation; then exclaimed, "Now you have just heard one of the greatest sermons you ever listened to in your lives. Mr. Benson himself could not beat it; *for it is one of his best.*" He had actually repeated, almost literally, and with tremenduous effect, one of the most eloquent sermons of this great preacher.

His fondness for hunting almost assumed the form of a passion. He usually carried his gun with him round the circuit, and his rest days were generally spent with some family near a forest where game abounded. He seldom returned from his hunting excursions without bringing ample proof of his skill as a marksman.

One of his greatest feats was the killing of a large panther in the county of Hanover, while hunting wild turkeys. He found the monster crouched in the branches of a large tree, glaring on him with his fiery eyes. Nothing daunted, he cautiously approached and watching his opportunity, fired upon him with a single charge of large shot. The huge brute fell dead to the ground. This scene he would describe in all its details in his own peculiar manner, as one of his greatest exploits as a hunter.

He travelled in the Virginia Conference until the

failure of his health disqualified him for the full work of the ministry, he then took a superannuated relation to the Conference and soon after removed to Tennessee where he settled on a small farm. Here he spent his time in preaching, cultivating the soil and re-enacting the hunting scenes of his youth. His next move was to Missouri, where he lived a few years useful in his labors, and beloved by all who knew him. Here he ended his days in peace in the year 1848.

His wife gave an interesting account of his last moments: "My monitor, my guide has gone to reap the reward of forty-five years faithfully spent in the ministry. But a little time before he left me, he told me he should not be long with me, and that his way was clear and bright as the noonday sun; that not the shadow of a doubt rested on his mind. He then said: 'Betsy, I want you to hold fast whereunto you have attained, read the Scriptures, pray much, live holy and meet me in heaven.'"

Thus died John C. Ballew. His venerable partner survived him until the year 1861, when she left this world and ascended to meet him in heaven. She remained in Missouri several years after his death, and then at the solicitation of her friends removed to Virginia. She found a comfortable home in the family of her nephew, Mr. James Lyons, near the city of Richmond, where she lived a cheerful, contented and ripe Christian lady, calmly awaiting the summons to rejoin her sainted husband. Mrs. Ballew was in every sense a model Christian. She was highly intelligent, well versed in the doctrines of the Bible, and

an ardent Methodist. She had braved the trials of the itinerancy in the days that tried the souls of those noble women who cheerfully shared the labors of our early preachers. The memory of her husband was cherished as a sacred treasure; she scarcely ever mentioned him without visible emotion, and invariably spoke of him as "that precious and immortal spirit" whom she longed to meet on the shores of the heavenly Canaan. She manifested a lively interest in all the enterprises of the Church, but the cause of missions lay especially near her heart. When in extreme age she toiled diligently in making various articles which were sold for the benefit of the missionary treasury. Some of our readers will remember that at the Virginia Conference at Alexandria, in 1860, a large and excellent bed quilt was exhibited at the missionary meeting wrought entirely by this sainted woman when she was above eighty years of age. It was sold for one hundred dollars and presented to Bishop Paine. The life of Mrs. Ballew was truly a life of faith. Not a doubt seemed to linger in her mind; not a cloud appeared in her sky. Steadily the Sun of Righteousness shone upon her, and illumined her life with full splendor. Her love for the house of God was ardent, and though for years before her death she was a cripple, hobbling on crutches, she regularly filled her place in the Church, unless prevented by sickness. The Lord's supper was a spiritual feast to her soul, and the members of Centenary Church, in Richmond, will never forget those impressive, monthly scenes when this mother in Israel, wrecked in body, but strong as an angel in spirit, would on her seat, her

aged face bedewed with tears, receive the emblems of a Saviour's dying love.

She was taken to rest after a very short illness, and with little suffering. Her ardent wish was to be buried by the side of her much loved companion in Missouri, but the war prevented this, and she was laid among her kindred in the old burying-ground in New Kent county. Elizabeth Dandridge Ballew was one of the heroines of Methodism.

Had she lived in the earliest ages of Christianity, when holy men and women were often called to seal their faith with their blood, her name might have been enrolled in that noble army of martyrs whose blood was the seed of the Church.

The year 1803 is famous for the introduction of camp meetings into Virginia. In the spring of this year the first meeting of this kind was held in the county of Brunswick. It was held "at a new meeting house," says Jesse Lee, "which was named *Camp Meeting House*, that it might be remembered in future, the first camp-meeting in that part of the world was held at that place." The exercises began on the 27th, and closed on the 30th of May. During this time thirty persons were converted. From this date these meetings became almost an institution of Methodism, and so vast were the numbers converted at them, that it becomes proper to give some account of their origin.

Camp meetings arose during the great revival which prevailed in the "Western Country," as it was then called, in the years 1799, 1800, and 1801.

This great work broke out under the preaching of

two brothers, John and William McGee, the one a Presbyterian the other a Methodist minister. It is supposed that they removed from North Carolina and settled in West Tennessee. Their difference in doctrinal views did not prevent them from laboring together as true yoke-fellows in the gospel. In 1799 they set off on a preaching tour through a portion of Kentucky called the "Barrens." On this journey they attended a sacramental meeting under the charge of Rev. Mr. McGready, a Presbyterian minister. At this meeting the McGees preached with great fervor and effect. Messrs. Rankin and Hoge, Presbyterians, were also in attendance and preached in the power of the Holy Ghost. "Such was the movement among the people, evidently under the impulses of the Divine Spirit, that, though Messrs. McGready, Hoge and Rankin left the house, the two McGees continued in their places, watching the movement of the waters. William McGee soon felt such a power come over him that he, not seeming to know what he did, left his seat and sat down on the floor, while John sat trembling under a consciousness of the power of God. He was expected to preach, but instead of that he arose and told the people that the overpowering nature of his feelings would not allow of his preaching, but as the Lord was evidently among them, he earnestly exhorted the people to surrender their hearts to him. Sobs and cries bespoke the deep feeling which pervaded the hearts of the people."

The tidings of this scene spread far and wide, and the people came in crowds to see what these things meant. They came with their wagons, bringing

bedding and provisions; some built temporary huts, or pitched their hunting tents; and these Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians all united together to push on the good work.

At the expense of being tedious we present an original letter, never in print before, we believe, from John McGee to Asbury, giving a minute account of a similar meeting. The historical value of the letter must be an apology for its length:

"CUMBERLAND, June 10th, 1801.

"DEAR SIR:

"As I know it gives you satisfaction to hear of the Lord's work, so it gives me pleasure to communicate. On Friday, the 5th instant, I attended a Presbyterian sacrament on Red River, in Mr. McGready's congregation; the place where this glorious work first began in great power a year ago (namely in August, 1800.) I took a minute of the most particular circumstances which took place during the meeting. We met on Friday. Mr. McKadoo, introduced the solemn occasion by a sermon on Leviticus xi: 44: "For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." To the purpose, but nothing extraordinary appeared amongst the people. In the afternoon, William McGee preached on John x: 27: 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.' At the close of his discourse there was a good move; some of the Christians were much blessed and gave glory to God. At the light-

ing of a candle, I stood on the stage; the subject was in Matt. xxiv: 44: 'Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh.' The appearance seemed to increase, several poor sinners cried for mercy, but none were converted that we knew of. Saturday, the 6th, Mr. Rankin preached on John xvii: 3: 'And this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' At the close of his sermon the Lord was present in power, and gave sanction to his word; many were filled with joy in believing, while others trembled and fell to the earth, being in pain to be delivered from the body of sin and death; there could be no more preaching; the work went on till sometime in the night, during which time there were several exhortations delivered with life and power, chiefly by lay members, and three souls, we have reason to believe, struggled into the glorious liberty of the Son of God.

"Lord's day, (the 7th inst.) Mr. McGready preached on John xvi chapter, 24th verse: 'Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.' At the close of his sermon there was a considerable move among the people for the space of two hours, during which time one soul professed to find peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and a number more appeared in great distress. For some time we were held in suspense whether the Lord's supper would be administered this day or not, but after some time the stir abated and then the sacrament was administered, during which time Brother John Page (circuit preacher) preached at the house some distance from the stand, on

these words: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." Afterward there was an exhortation given, and the power of God came down and there was a great cry, which continued till some time in the night, and seven souls professed to find the Lord to be a sin-pardoning God; their souls being filled with joy in the Holy Ghost.

"Monday, the 8th, the Lord began to work, the people were all collected and a poor, old, grayheaded, persecuting sinner cried for mercy, and God granted him mercy, and he gave glory to God with a loud voice.

"Preaching by Mr. Hoge, on John v. chapter, 40th verse: "And ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life," began at the usual time, but the people seemed stupid. In the afternoon I spake on 2 Cor., v. chapter, 20th verse, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." At the close of the discourse the Christians prayed, and the Lord answered; his power came down, and an exercise began and continued all night, we could not ascertain the number converted, but we had good evidence to believe that between ten and twenty found Christ Jesus the Lord. What was remarkable, just after the exercise began this evening, there was a dreadful storm of thunder and lightning, wind and rain, and that, together with the shouts of the happy Christians, the cries of the wounded, distressed sinners, the exhortations and prayers of the active members, proved an awful scene. It is worthy of observa-

tion that though it had threatened once or twice before, during the meeting, it rained not, till the preachers had preached, and done all they could, and the Christians had prayed and done all they could to recover poor, gospel hardened sinners from the jaws of ruin; but all this was likely to prove ineffectual—then God spake by awful claps of thunder, and while heaven, earth and the terrors of hell spake, many poor sinners fell to the floor, and cried in bitter agonies of soul for mercy.

"There were twenty wagons and stages at this meeting loaded with people and provisions. The preachers' hearts seemed warmly attached to God, his work and each other. Party spirit and narrow faced bigotry are dying fast. O, that they were exterminated from the earth, and that all God's ministers could see eye to eye, and love, and preach, and pray together. It is wonderful to hear the children speak of the wonders of the Lord, in strains of wisdom and piety surpassing human powers; this must be the effect of the spirit of the Lord within.

"As we returned home we fell in with three wagons going from the meeting; the people within were making the barrens ring with their praises to God, while some of them were quite overcome and helpless with his power and love. Brother Page was under an obligation to go from our meeting to attend one of his appointments at a place called the Ponds, (on Monday) and he informed us that the Lord was there in power, and ten souls professed to find Him 'of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write,' and shouted victory through the blood of the

Lamb; a number more seemed in deep exercise, and we hear some of them have been converted since. O, that this glorious work would spread to the ends of the earth!

"Yours in Jesus Christ,
"JOHN MCGEE."

The great and blessed results of these meetings induced the preachers to appoint others in different localities, to which the people flocked by thousands. The Cane Ridge camp-meeting was a season of extraordinary power. "Here a vast concourse of people assembled under the foliage of the trees, and continued their religious exercises day and night. This novel way of worshipping God excited great attention. In the night the grove was illuminated with lighted candles, lamps, or torches. This, together with the stillness of the night, the solemnity which rested on every countenance, the pointed and earnest manner with which the preachers exhorted the people to repentance, prayer, and faith, produced the most awful sensations in the minds of all present. While some were exhorting, others crying for mercy, and some shouting the praises of God, in the assembly, numbers were retired in secluded places in the grove, pouring out the desire of their wounded spirits in earnest prayer. It often happened that these were liberated from their sins, and their hearts filled with joy and gladness while thus engaged in their solitary devotions; and then they would come into the encampment and declare what God had done for their souls. This information, communicated to their

brethren, in the artless simplicity of "new-born souls," would produce a thrill of joy which could hardly be suppressed; and thus they reciprocated with each other in their sorrows and joys, and excited one another to the exercise of faith in the promise of God, and to perseverance in the good work."

Another great meeting was held on Desha's Creek, near the Cumberland river. Among the many thousands that attended this meeting, a great many fell before the power of the truth, and were happily converted. John McGee, who was present, says the people fell "like corn before a storm of wind," and that scores who were thus slain, "arose from the dust with divine glory beaming upon their countenances," and burst forth in such strains of praise to God as made the hearts of sinners, who looked on, to quake with fear. But no sooner were their first ecstasies over than these young converts began to exhort their friends and neighbors to turn to the Lord and live. "It was difficult to resist the power of their words, for they spoke of what they felt, and their words were sharper than a 'two-edged sword,' piercing the heart, and extorting the cry, 'What shall I do to be saved?'"

It cannot be supposed that this great work of grace went on without opposition from the world and the devil. The sons of Belial gathered with the sons of God. "Some would scoff, others would philosophize, and the latter would dogmatize in no stinted terms of religious intolerance," while they gazed upon these wonderful works of God. But to all objectors there was one argument perfectly irre-

sistible. Often the most violent opponents of what they called "wild fire," would be swept by the flame, their hearts melted, and "falling down on their faces, they would worship God, and report that God was with them of a truth." In many instances "blasphemers and mockers, persecutors, and bigoted dogmatizers, were not only struck dumb, but the 'tongue of the dumb was made to sing,' and these fierce opposers of the work stood forth as its boldest champions." Meanwhile the congregations at these meetings constantly increased. Public curiosity was excited to the highest pitch; the newspapers of the day were filled with accounts of the strange and awful scenes witnessed in the primeval forests of the West. Some came to be religiously benefited, others out of mere curiosity, and many to furnish themselves with arguments against what seemed to them the wildest fanaticism.

In Kentucky, in 1801, the numbers that attended were immense. According to the density or sparseness of the population in the sections where they were held, the multitudes ranged from three to twenty thousand. At one held on Cabin Creek, there were at least twenty thousand persons on the ground. At this great feast of tabernacles the Methodists and Presbyterians heartily joined in the work of saving souls. The scenes are described as impressive and awful in the highest degree. "Few, if any," says an eye witness, "escaped without being affected. Such as tried to run from it were frequently struck on the way, or impelled by some alarming signal to return. No circumstance at this meeting appeared

more striking than the great numbers that fell on the third night; and to prevent their being trodden under foot by the multitude, they were collected together and laid out in order, on one or two squares of the meeting house, till a considerable part of the floor was covered. But the great meeting at Cane Ridge exceeded all. The number that fell at this meeting was reckoned at about three thousand, among whom were several Presbyterian ministers, who, according to their own confession, had hitherto possessed only a speculative knowledge of religion. Here the formal professor, the deist, the intemperate, met with one common lot, and confessed with equal candor that they were destitute of the true knowledge of God and strangers to the religion of Jesus Christ."

It was naturally impossible for the voice of one speaker to reach the whole of the vast concourse of people in the forests; it was therefore customary to divide them into groups, and these were addressed by several preachers at the same time. At these great meetings there was everything to raise the emotions of the morally sublime in the soul, especially at night. "The range of the tents—the fires reflecting light through the branches of the trees—the candles and lamps illuminating the entire encampments—hundreds of immortal beings moving to and fro—some preaching—some praying for mercy—others praising God from a sense of his pardoning mercy—all these presented a scene indescribably awful and affecting." The light and the stout-hearted were alike arrested and overpowered in the midst of the thrilling scenes, and in oft repeated instances those who came to scoff

remained to pray. One illustration must suffice out of many that might be given :

"A gentleman and lady of some standing in the gay circle of life, attended the above meeting with a view to divert themselves at the expense of those whom they considered as deluded with a strange infatuation. With these thoughts they agreed that if one of them should fall the other should not fly. They had not been long on the ground before the lady fell. The merry gentleman, untrue to his promise, and frightened at the sight of his female friend on the ground, fled with great precipitancy. He had not gone more than two hundred yards, before he also was prostrate on the ground, and was soon surrounded by a praying multitude."

Among the most efficient Methodist preachers at these Western camp meeting was William McKendree. "It is said that while he held up before the people the truths of the gospel, intermingled with narrations of the work of God at these meetings, his whole soul seemed to be filled with 'glory and with God,' and that his very countenance beamed with brightness." He was aided by a noble band of itinerants, among whom we may record the names of William Burke, John Sale, Benjamin Lakin, and Henry Smith, men who gave themselves to the work of Christ with a zeal worthy of apostolic days.

Soon after the rise of camp-meetings appeared that singular affection known as the *Jerks*. One of the most interesting accounts of this exercise has been furnished by Rev. Jacob Young in his autobiography.

"In 1804 I first witnessed that strange exercise,

the jerks, although I had heard much of it before. It took subjects from all denominations and all classes of society, even the wicked; but it prevailed chiefly among the Presbyterians. I will give some instances.

"A Mr. Doke, a Presbyterian clergyman of high standing, having charge of a congregation in Jonesborough, was the first man of eminence in this region that came under its influence. Often it would seize him in the pulpit with so much severity, that a spectator might fear it would dislocate his neck and joints. He would laugh, stand and halloo at the top of his voice, finally leap from the pulpit, and run to the woods, screaming like a madman. When the exercise was over, he would return to the church calm and rational as ever. Sometimes at hotels this affection would visit persons, causing them, for example, in the very act of raising the glass to their lips, to jerk and throw the liquid to the ceiling, much to the merriment of some, and the alarm of others. I have often seen ladies take it at the breakfast table; as they were pouring out tea or coffee they would throw the contents toward the ceiling, and sometimes break the cup and saucer. Then hastening from the table, their long suits of braided hair hanging down their back would crack like a whip. For a time the jerks was a topic of conversation—public and private—both in the church and out. Various opinions were expressed concerning it, some ascribing it to the devil, others to an opposite source; some striving against it, others courting it as the power of God unto salvation. In many cases its consequences were disastrous, in some fatal.

A preacher, who was in early life a dancing-master, joined the Conference, and was sent to a circuit where the jerks greatly prevailed. He declared it was of the devil, and that he would preach it out of the Methodist Church. He commenced the work with great zeal and high expectations; but before he had got once round, he took the jerks himself, or rather the jerks took him. When the fit began he would say, 'Ah yes! O no!' At every jerk he used his hands and arms as if he was playing the violin. One morning, being seized as he was going to his appointment, he let go the bridle and the horse ran off till he was stopped by a gate. The rider, having dismounted, in order to steady himself, laid hold of the palings of the fence, which unfortunately gave way; the lady of the house coming to the door to see what was the matter, heightened his mortification. Attempting to hide himself by running into the orchard his strange movement, as he ran fiddling along, and the tail of his long gown flying in the wind, attracted the attention of the hounds, the whole pack of which pursued him with hideous yells. Being afraid of dogs he turned and rushed into the house by the back door, and running up stairs jumped into a bed, where he lay till the fit was over.

His proud heart would not submit and the disease, as he termed it, growing worse and worse, he gave up the circuit and withdrew into retirement, where his sun went down under a cloud.

Usually, the subjects of this strange affection were happy when they had it, and happy when it passed off, and it did them no harm. The wise ones of the day,

such as William McKendree and Thomas Wilkerson, said little about it, but preached, exhorted and prayed as if it was not in the country.

At the close of the year, I attended a Camp-meeting at Carter's Station, where about ten thousand people were assembled. Here a controversy had been going on between Presbyterians and Methodists, the former saying, among other bitter things, that the latter were hypocrites and could refrain from shouting if they would. They were the aristocracy, we the poor. On Monday morning I preached, preceded by the venerable Vanpelt; who left the congregation calmly and silently weeping. I arose—like most men who know nothing—fearing nothing, and undertook to account for the Jerks. The preachers looked frightened and the audience astonished. I viewed it as a judgment of God. Taking a compendious view of the nations, I showed that God was just, as well as merciful, and his judgments though long delayed, sure to come. I adverted to the wickedness of the people, enlarging on their intolerance and bigotry, charging that Middle Tennessee had gone as far as any part of the United States in these particulars. I glanced at the rise of Methodism and the persecutions it had endured, and quoted the taunting language of its enemies: 'Ye are hypocrites and can cease shouting if ye will.' After a pause, I exclaimed at the top of my voice, 'Do you leave off jerking if you can?'

It was estimated that instantly more than five hundred persons commenced jumping, shouting and jerking. There was no more preaching that day."

We give another and fuller account furnished by

Rev. Barton W. Stone, a prominent minister of the Presbyterian Church, and a witness of many of the scenes he describes:

"The bodily agitations or exercises attending the excitement in the beginning of this century were various, and called by various names, as the falling exercise, the jerks, the dancing exercise, the barking exercise, the laughing and singing exercises, and so on. The falling exercise was very common among all classes, the saints and sinners of every age and grade, from the philosopher to the clown. The subjects of this exercise would generally, with a piercing scream, fall like a log on the floor or earth, and appear as dead. Of thousands of similar cases, I will mention one: At a meeting two gay young ladies, sisters, were standing together, attending the exercises and preaching at the same time, when instantly they both fell with a shriek of distress, and lay for more than an hour apparently in a lifeless state. Their mother, a pious Baptist, was in great distress, fearing they would not survive. At length they began to exhibit signs of life, by crying fervently for mercy, and then relapsed into the same death-like state, with an awful gloom on their countenances; after a while the gloom on the face of one was succeeded by a heavenly smile, and she cried out, 'Precious Jesus!' and spoke of the glory of the gospel to the surrounding crowd in language almost superhuman, and exhorted all to repentance. In a little while after, the other sister was similarly exercised. From that time they became remarkably pious members of the Church.

"I have seen very many pious persons fall in the same way, from a sense of the danger of their unconverted children, brothers, or sisters, or from a sense of the danger of their neighbors in a sinful world. I have heard them agonizing in tears, and strongly crying for mercy to be shown to sinners, and speaking like angels all around.

"The jerks cannot be so easily described. Sometimes the subject of the jerks would be affected in some one member of the body, and sometimes in the whole system. When the head alone was affected, it would be jerked backward or forward, or from side to side, so quickly that the features of the face could not be distinguished. When the whole system was affected, I have seen the person stand in one place, and jerk backward and forward in quick succession, the head nearly touching the floor behind and before. All classes, saints and sinners, the strong as well as the weak, were thus affected. I have enquired of those thus affected if they could not account for it, but some have told me that those were among the happiest seasons of their lives. I have seen some wicked persons thus affected, and all the time cursing the jerks, while they were thrown to the earth with violence.

Though so awful to behold, I do not remember that any one of the thousands I have seen thus affected ever sustained any bodily injury. This was as strange as the exercise itself.

The dancing exercise generally began with the jerks, and was peculiar to professors of religion. The subject, after jerking a while, began to dance,

and then the jerks would cease. Such dancing was indeed heavenly to the spectators. There was nothing in it like levity, nor calculated to excite levity in the beholders. The smile of heaven shone on the countenance of the subject, and assimilated to angels appeared the whole person. Sometimes the motion was quick, and sometimes slow. Thus they continued to move forward and backward in the same track or alley till nature seemed exhausted, and they would fall prostrate on the floor or earth, unless caught by those standing by. While thus exercised, I have heard their solemn praises and prayers ascend to God.

"The barking exercise, as opposers contemptuously called it, was nothing but the jerks. A person thus affected, especially in his head, would often make a grunt or bark, from the suddenness of the jerk. This name of barking seems to have had its origin from an old Presbyterian preacher of East Tennessee. He had gone into the woods for private devotion, and was siezed with the jerks. Standing near a sapling, he caught hold of it to prevent his falling; and, as his head jerked back, he uttered a grunt, or a kind of noise similar to a bark, his face being turned upward. Some wag discovered him in this position, and reported that he had found the old preacher barking up a tree.

"The laughing exercise was frequent,—confined solely to the religious. It was a loud, hearty laughter, but it excited laughter in none that saw it. The subject appeared rapturously solemn, and his laughter produced solemnity in saints and sinners; it was truly indescribable.

The running exercise was nothing more than that persons feeling something of these bodily agitations, through fear, attempted to run away, and thus escape from them, but it commonly happened that they ran not far before they fell, when they became so agitated they could not proceed any farther.

"I knew a young physician, of a celebrated family, who came some distance to a big meeting to see the strange things he had heard of. He and a young lady had sportively agreed to watch over and take care of each other, if either should fall. At length the physician felt something very uncommon, and started from the congregation to run to the woods. He was discovered running as for life, but did not proceed far until he fell down, and there lay until he submitted to the Lord, and afterwards became a zealous member of the Church. Such cases were common.

"The singing exercise is more unaccountable than anything else I ever saw. The subject, in a very happy state of mind, would sing most melodiously, not from the mouth or nose, but entirely in the breast, the sounds issuing thence. Such noise silenced everything, and attracted the attention of all. It was most heavenly; none could ever tire of hearing it.

"Thus have I given," says Mr. Stone, "a brief account of the wonderful things that appeared in the great excitement in the beginning of this century. That there were many eccentricities and much fanaticism in this excitement was acknowledged by its warmest advocates. Indeed, it would have been a

wonder if such things had not appeared in the circumstances of that time. Yet the good effects were seen and acknowledged in every neighborhood, and among the different sects. It silenced contention and promoted unity for a while."

The Rev. Joseph Travis gives his observations on some of these exercises on his first circuit in South Carolina:

"I was not a little concerned in witnessing the jerks and dancing exercise. To see persons tumbling down and jerking hard enough, I thought, to dislocate the joints; women's combs flying in every direction, and their hair popping almost as loud as wagon whips; I knew not what to think of it. I had never before seen the like. I can never forget one Sabbath, standing on a floor to preach; a pious, upright man, the class-leader, was standing close by me; and while we were repeating and singing the first hymn, he was taken with the jerks, knocked the hymn-book out of my hand and gave my unfortunate nose a hard rap. It was some time before I could recover from my consternation and pain; and in spite of myself an association of ideas intruded upon me something like this: that if the jerks were from God he would not wish me to preach to that congregation under such maltreatment inflicted on me by the jerks."

He soon recovered however, and preached as if nothing had happened. He found that such exercises were much more prevalent with weak-minded and nervous professors, than with those of well-cultivated minds and healthy bodies. The jerks were principally confined to the Western country. We be-

lieve that very rarely, if at all, did it occur at the numerous camp-meetings which were held in Virginia.

A fresh impulse was given to the work by the Camp-meeting already referred to in Brunswick. Another was held in the same county, in the course of the summer, at a meeting-house called the "Barn;' here there was a signal outpouring of the Spirit, and at the close of the meeting the Church rejoiced over one hundred converts. The revival now began to spread in every direction through the State. "Under date of this year, Jesse Lee writes: "There was a very great in-gathering of precious souls in Virginia."

At Harrisonburg, in Rockingham, there was a good work in which thirty souls were gathered into the Church; at Shepherdstown there was a gracious visitation. At Leesburg, during a Quarterly Meeting there was a most refreshing season; so great was the concern among the people, that the preachers "went from house to house to talk to the distressed, and to sing and pray with them." One of the meetings lasted sixteen hours without intermission, "in which time fifteen souls were converted." In Winchester circuit, at a Quarterly Meeting, which was held for four days as a sort of Camp-meeting, "the Lord was eminently present," and about fifty were converted. In the village of Front Royal the work broke out and many souls were brought to God. These are but partial indications of the glorious work which swept over the whole field of Methodism.

As Camp-meetings became highly popular in Vir-

ginia from the time of their introduction, and were held with great success all over the State, it may be interesting to the reader to look on the picture of a Camp-meeting in the olden time, drawn by Jesse Lee.

"1. With regard to the laying out of the ground; we have two, three, or four acres of land cleared of the undergrowth, in an oblong square sufficient to hold as many tents as will be erected. We have then the fronts of the tents on a line on each side, and at each end. Back of the tents we have a place cleared for the carriages to stand, whether they be wagons, carts, or riding carriages; so that every tent may have the carriage belonging to it in a convenient position. Just back of the carriages we have the horses tied and fed. Before the tents we generally have the fires for cooking, and to help in giving light at night to those who are walking about. But when it is not convenient to have the fire in front of the tent, it is placed behind it.

"2. We have one or two stages erected; if we have two, one is near the one end of the ground, and the other near the opposite end; but both within the lines whereon the tents are fixed. At each stage we have a sufficient number of seats to contain the principal part of the attentive hearers, who are requested to sit according to our form, the men on one side and the women on the other. The stages are placed at such a distance from each other, that if necessity should require it, we might preach at each stage at the same time. Or in case there should be a great degree of life and power among the people at one stage, we

might, without interrupting their devotion in singing and praying, withdraw to the other stage and preach to as many as might wish to hear.

"3. We have the ground within the tents illuminated at night by candles which we fix to the stage, the trees, and other places prepared for the purpose. These candles with the light of the fires, keep the whole ground sufficiently illuminated. On some occasions, I have seen at these meetings as many as one hundred and twenty candles burning at the same time. These lights in a dark night, when the evening is calm, add greatly to the solemnity of the meeting.

"4. We generally appoint a guard, or watch, of a sufficient number of men, and request them by turn to walk all night through and around the encampment, to prevent disorderly persons from doing mischief, either in disturbing the people, or their property.

"5. We proceed in our religious exercises as follows: soon after the first dawn of day, a person walks all round the ground, in front of the tents, blowing a trumpet as he passes, which is to give the the people notice to rise; about ten minutes after, the trumpet is blown again with only one long blast, upon which the people in all their tents begin to sing and pray, either in their tents or at the doors of them as is most convenient. At the rising of the sun a sermon is preached, after which we eat breakfast. We have preaching again at ten o'clock, and dine about one. We preach again at three o'clock, eat supper about the setting of the sun, and have preaching again at candle-light."

CHAPTER XII.

Asbury's plans for aiding worn-out preachers—His travels in Virginia—Conference of 1804—William Ormond—Nathan Jarratt—Action on the slavery question—Petition of the Virginia Conference on the subject. Fourth General Conference—Measures adopted—Revivals in Virginia—Methodism in Lynchburg—Appearance of Lorenzo Dow in the State—Sketch of his life—Revival in Winchester and adjacent circuits. Rev. Mr. Crum—"I must be converted in Dutch."

THE Virginia Conference for 1804 was appointed at Salem Chapel, Mecklenburg county, on the 10th of April. Asbury reached the limits of the State about the middle of May, on his way from the South. His health was feeble, but his labors were incessant. At Norfolk and Portsmouth he preached with freedom and effect. At the former place, "at a meeting of the women," he writes, "we laid the foundation of a female charitable society of Norfolk; similar in plan to those of New York and Baltimore, but more liberal; may this live, grow and flourish when I am cold and forgotten."

The object of these societies, the plan of which appears to have been suggested by Asbury, was to aid in raising funds for the support of the deficient and worn-out preachers. In an address of the President and Directors of this Norfolk society to the Conference of 1820, they say: "We very highly esteem

that part of the economy of the Church, which makes a large portion of her ministers missionaries, and for their better support entered with delight and ardor into the formation and management of the affairs of this Society."

It appears that there was a sort of parent society at Norfolk with branches in the adjacent counties or circuits, for in the Treasurer's report we find entries of accounts received from Princess Ann, Camden, Bertie, Suffolk, Sussex, and Columbia, Societies, besides subscriptions from persons residing in other places. These auxiliaries sent their reports to the parent society near the close of the year, and a general report was then prepared by the Treasurer for the Annual Conference.

From Norfolk, Asbury travelled along toward the seat of the Conference, preaching along the whole route. We give a few extracts from his journal. "I preached at a new meeting-house fourteen miles up the road towards Suffolk; here, after thirty years' labor, first and last, we have a chapel; I named it Ebenezer. At Suffolk on Tuesday, unwell as I was, labor went hard with me; I had an almost total obstruction of perspiration, but a pulpit sweat relieved me in a good degree. My soul is calm. Wednesday, 28th of April, I preached at Powell's Chapel; on Thursday, at Benn's Chapel, Isle of Wight, we had a decent but not a feeling congregation. After preaching I rode up to William Blunt's. On Good Friday, so called, I preached at Blunt's, and administered the sacrament. I rode to Joseph Moody's. We drew the plan of a new house, forty by thirty

feet, two stories high, but will it ever be built? I doubt it. On Sabbath I preached in an old abandoned Episcopal church in Southampton. Wednesday, May 4th, I preached at Mabry's Chapel, made anew; now sixty by twenty-five feet. I was a preacher here before the first house was built, thirty years ago; first an addition was made, now it is rebuilt in another form and a gallery added for the blacks. I rode home in the rain with Peter Pelham; here is death temporal and life spiritual. Thomas Pelham was converted, and is dead since my last visit, and there remain three living children, new born babes." On Sunday the 8th he was in Brunswick: "I am taking leave of the people every visit," he writes, "I have made up one thousand miles from Augusta, Georgia, to Brunswick county, Virginia. In old Virginia I have administered the word thirty years. There is a great mortality among the aged; our old members drop off surprisingly, but they all, by account, die in the Lord, and in general, triumphantly. Now I have finished my awful tour of duty for the past month. To ride twenty and thirty miles a day; to preach, baptize, and administer the Lord's Supper; to write and answer letters, and plan for myself and four hundred preachers—O Lord, I have not desired this awful day thou knowest. I refused to travel as long as I could, and I lived long before I took upon me the Superintendency of the Methodist Church in America, and now I bear it as a heavy load; I hardly bear it, and yet dare not cast it down, for fear God and my brethren should cast me down for such an abandonment of duty. True it is,

my wages are great—precious souls here, and glory hereafter."

The Virginia Conference for 1804 began at Salem, Mecklenburg county, on the 10th of April.

"The following persons were presented, recommended, and admitted without any debate on their cases:

"Joseph Tarpley, Daniel Kelly, William Barnes, Thomas Shands, Isaac Hall, Archibald Alexander, David McMaster, William Owen, William Blair, James Boyd, James Jennings, Enoch Jones, and Ira Ellis. George Dillard was proposed, but not recommended in order from the Quarterly Meeting; however, upon the verbal recommendation of some members of Conference, and on condition that Jesse Lee, or the presiding elder of the District, shall bring to the next Annual Conference his recommendation in form, he is now admitted, and his name to be published in the Minutes." We find rather a curious specimen of Conference action recorded in the journal of this session.

"Jonathan Jackson had a complaint lodged against him of carrying a petition, with several signatures, to the General Conference, praying an alteration of something in the form of Discipline. The Conference took the matter under consideration, and after a very lengthy conversation on the subject, it was proposed to separate a vote that was moved, in order to keep distinct the person carrying the said petition from the matter of the same. It was moved that those who disapproved of the form in which he obtained signatures should rise; thirteen rose. It was then

reversed, and one voted in approbation; several, however, did not wish to vote on the occasion, and when the numbers of the passive members were counted, they amounted to seventeen. It was next moved to vote on the matter or contents of the petition. Five condemned the contents of said petition, three approved of them, and twenty-three voted to be passive on them."

The deficiencies of the preachers were reported at $260.00; to meet their wants the following sums were in hand:

"By the circuits,	$161 93
" Peter Pelham's gift,	10 00
" Green Hill's legacy,	58 33
" Chartered Fund,	100 00
" Marriage money,	3 00
" Private gifts,	12 00
	$345 26

"After paying all just claims on the Conference, there remained on hand $85.26, which, by a vote of the Conference, was equally divided among the preachers going to the General Conference, to bear their expenses. The following are the persons: Philip Bruce, Jesse Lee, Jonathan Jackson, Daniel Hall, Samuel Risher, Joseph Moore, Christopher S. Mooring, Joseph Pinnell, Humphrey Wood, Alexander M'Cain, William Allgood, Josiah Philips, Jesse Coe, John Cox, John Gamewell, Daniel Ross, and John Buxton."

"Joseph Moore and Philip Bruce, only survivors of the committee appointed by the last Conference to

prepare a Remonstrance and Petition, prepared and brought before this Conference said petition, which, on being read, with the alteration of three words, was adopted by this, and sent to the General Conference."

The Conference "recommended the sitting of the next Conference to continue six days." Of this session Asbury writes: "We sat six hours a day, and wrought with great application. We had an addition of fifteen preachers, besides two dead, seven located, one expelled; so there was a gain of eight. I liked what was done; only, the preachers' experience, the state of the work, and the circuits were not given; so we concluded to recommend a session of six days for the next yearly Conference. What I have felt, was only known to the Lord; what I have done, was for God and his Church. We have added, after great mortality, one thousand members to the Virginia Conference bounds."

The membership was reported at 13,382 whites and 3,757 colored. There were thirty-four appointments within the circuits of the Conference, supplied by forty-nine preachers. Two faithful laborers had fallen, William Ormond and Nathan Jarratt.

Ormond was a native of North Carolina, and had been in the ministry twelve years. "He was quick in body and in mind, but was affectionate, fervent and faithful; he was gracious and giftful, a good man and a good preacher. He had a high sense of the rights of men, of Christians, and of Christian ministers, but was open to information when candidly and mildly addressed." While stationed at Norfolk

in 1803, the yellow fever broke out, but he stood bravely at his post. In the midst of the epidemic he wrote to a friend: "I expect to continue upon my station, for it appears I cannot well leave it at this time. I may as well die with the fever as with any other affliction, and there is as direct a passage from Norfolk to heaven as from any other port on the globe. I shall leave no widow to weep over my lifeless body, and no babes to mourn for a father, and I find this world is a dangerous and troublesome place."

These are the words of a true soldier of the cross. He was soon called to the last trial of his faith. He was summoned to attend an importaut church trial in Brunswick, and left Norfolk with the fatal infection already lodged in his system. On his return to his charge he was taken extremely ill, and in a few days gave up his labors with his life. He died happy in God, shouting with his latest breath, "Peace, peace, victory, victory, complete victory."

Jarratt was also a native of North Carolina. His career was brief but brilliant; four years only did he work in the vineyard. "He was a man of great zeal, a pleasing voice, amiable in his manners and much beloved." His loss was deeply lamented by the Conference. His death was joyful and triumphant. "The night before he departed, after lying in an apparent state of insensibility for some time, he broke out in a rapture of joy, and sung the following lines:

'Arise and shine, O Zion fair,
Behold thy light is come;
The glorious conquering King is nigh,
To take his exiles home.'

And then in a few moments sweetly slept in Jesus."

We have seen that this Conference prepared and sent to the General Conference a petition on the subject of slavery. As this petition has not been preserved, we have no means of knowing precisely what change was desired in the rules on this troublesome question. By comparing the slavery action of the General Conference of 1800, with that of the present year, (1804,) we feel assured that the petition secured an important modification of the stringent regulations which had produced much dissatisfaction in the South. At the former General Conference, William Ormond had moved a number of alterations with the view of allowing members of the Church, in certain contingencies, to buy and sell slaves, mainly for the purpose of preventing, in cases of removal from one State to another, the separation of husbands and wives. This was doubtless one of the points embraced in the petition; for at this General Conference the clause in the rule of 1796, which required any member who sold a slave to be "immediately expelled," was so amended as to read: "Every member of the Society who sells a slave, except at the request of the slave, in cases of mercy and humanity, agreeably to the judgment of a commitee of the male members of the Society, appointed by the preacher who has charge of the circuit or station, shall immediately, after full proof, be excluded from the Society."

It is fair to presume that the petition bore on another important point. By the rules of 1800, "the Annual Conferences were directed to draw up ad-

dresses for the gradual emancipation of the slaves, to the Legislatures of those States in which no general laws had been passed for that purpose." The whole of this section was stricken out, and also paragraph No. 4, of 1796, which requested "the preachers and other members to consider the subject of negro slavery with deep attention," &c. At the close of the slavery rules adopted at this General Conference, we have the following clause:

"Nevertheless, the members of our Societies in the States of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia shall be exempted from the operation of the above rules." This shows how distasteful the action of the Church on this subject was to a vast majority of the members in the South. It is mortifying to think that the fathers of the Church should have placed themselves in so awkward a position by intermeddling with a question lying wholly beyond the range of ecclesiastical legislation.

The General Conference which met on the 7th of May at Baltimore, adopted a number of new rules for the government of the Church:

"The Bishops shall not allow any preacher to remain in the same circuit or station more than two years successively, excepting the Presiding Elders, supernumeraries, superannuated and worn-out preachers."

"In some cases," says Jesse Lee, in reference to this rule, "prior to this the Bishop had appointed a preacher, or preachers to the same place for three years together. We now determined on a better plan and formed this rule, to prevent any preacher from

wishing or expecting such an appointment in the future."

The following was adopted in reference to the President of an Annual Conference in the absence of a Bishop:

"In case there are two or more Presiding Elders belonging to one Conference, the Bishop or Bishops may by letter or otherwise appoint the President, but if no appointment be made, the Conference shall elect the President from among the Presiding Elders by ballot, without debate."

It was ordered that the assembly of the official members at Quarterly Meeting, be called "The Quarterly Meeting Conference."

The following regulation was also made:

"The Presiding Elder shall not employ a preacher who has been rejected at the preceding Annual Conference, unless the Conference give him liberty under certain conditions."

The rule against members who married out of the Society was made less stringent. Before this Conference the penalty was expulsion; they were now to be put back on trial for six months.

The year 1804 was fruitful of revivals in Virginia. In many parts of the State the work was very great. The Churches were alive with holy zeal, and the fire of love kindled from heart to heart. In the Valley of Virginia, and in some of the western counties, great numbers were gathered into the fold of Methodism.

The Quarterly Meetings were seasons of special interest: vast congregations attended, and many persons

came from a distance of forty or fifty miles. At one of these meetings, held at Little Levels, in Greenbrier, not less than one hundred souls were converted in the space of six days. But the Camp-meetings, which now became frequent, were marked by the most extraordinary displays of Divine power. During the Summer and Autumn thousands were brought to to God at these great gatherings of the saints. In the counties of Botetourt and Greenbrier alone, more than five hundred were converted at the different Camp-meetings. In the latter part of the Summer a meeting of this kind was held near the town of Suffolk, where the saving power of God was felt in a wonderful manner. The meeting was conducted by the Presiding Elder, Daniel Hall, assisted by a number of zealous and powerful preachers, both travelling and local. The exercises lasted but four days, and within that time nearly four hundred persons were converted.

"The accounts from that meeting," says Jesse Lee, "appear to be incredible to those who were not present; but those who were eye and ear-witnesses, think it too great to be sufficiently described."

Among the converts were many who became burning and shining lights in the world. The Allens, Yarboroughs, and Woodleys, families honored in the annals of Methodism, were enrolled at this meeting, besides many others whose memories are as ointment poured forth. The flame kindled here, rapidly spread to the surrounding circuits, and hundreds of happy converts in Norfolk, Portsmouth, Princess

Anne, Isle of Wight, and other places, crowded the gates of Zion.

Under the labors of Stith Mead and other preachers, the work greatly revived in Bedford, Campbell, Amherst and other counties in that portion of the State. Within six months at the various Camp and Quarterly Meetings conducted chiefly by this faithful man, nearly twelve hundred persons were converted, and eight hundred and fifty added to the Church.

We find some interesting details of this great revival in a letter from William Heath to Ezekiel Cooper dated,—

LYNCHBURG, JULY 24TH, 1804.

"To you I suppose it will be a matter of joy to hear of the prosperity of Zion in these parts of the Lord's vineyard.

"The Camp Meetings which have been usual in the South and West for some years never began with us until last Spring.

"On the 23d of March a Camp-Meeting was held by Lorenzo Dow, in conjunction with a number of other preachers and ministers, at which fifty souls professed to find peace with God; from this the work of God spread in almost every direction. At the several meetings which were held at Flat Creek Meeting House, by the 16th of April, twenty-four souls professed converting grace; and the work has continued to be more rapid at that place ever since; 40 have joined the Church there, and sixteen in the neighborhood above have professed conversion and planted a Society among us. In the town and vicin-

ity, from the beginning of the work in April, until now, from six to twelve and sixteen, at a meeting, have professed to find the pearl of great price; so that from a class of twenty members, we have now 160. Bless the Lord, O my soul! and let the people magnify his holy name!

"On the 4th of May, a meeting was appointed at a place fifteen miles above us, called the Tabernacle, to be held three days, but the work was so great that it was continued five days, day and night, with very little intermission; in which time one hundred were thought to have obtained true conversion.

"From the 12th to the 15th of May, at a place called New Hope, five miles from town, we had another meeting which also continued day and night, at which there were about one hundred converted, and many were daily added to our members. From the 17th to the 22nd of May, meeting again at Tabernacle, at which place the people encamped on the ground, and continued preaching, praying, and other godly exercises night and day for five days, in which time one hundred and fifty were converted, and one hundred and forty joined the Methodist Church.

From the 8th to the 12th of June, another Camp Meeting was held at Charity Chapel, Powhatan, at which one hundred souls were converted, and sixty joined the Methodist Church. From the 20th to the 24th of this month, we had a Camp Meeting in Bedford at Leftwich's meeting house, at which one hundred and ten came forward and gave testimony of their faith, that God had converted their souls.

Very many are the prayer, class, and preaching

meetings, not mentioned here, at which the Lord pours out his Spirit in a wonderful manner. Considering the low ebb of religion among us before the revival began, I can truly say that I never saw or read of greater times."

One of the happy results of this blessed work was the permanent establishment of Methodism in Lynchburg. Previous to this time, religion had made but little progress in that place. The circuit preachers occasionally visited the town, and held religious services in the Mason's Hall, but they met with little encouragement or success. Some of them were subjected to the taunts and railings of the ungodly, and were assailed in scurrilous articles in the town newspaper. Stith Mead, who may be called the founder of Methodism in Lynchburg, was soundly abused for no other reason, it would seem, than that he preached as a faithful minister of Christ against the vices of the place. In one article he was called a "Proud Pharisee," "a Hypocrite," "a Devil," "an infamous Wretch," a "Maniac," "a contemptible, vaporing, itinerant brawler," a "greater disgrace to humanity than the most dissolute man in Lynchburg."

The question was asked by the writer of this piece of Billingsgate: "Pray, Mr. Mead, how do you know whether or not the worship of God is or is not regarded in Lynchburg?" Mead replies in a sermon preached with reference to this publication, "My own eyes evidenced that while I have been preaching in this house (the Masons' Hall) on the Sabbath, the *five* yard has been lined with people at that foolish and wicked sport, to the disgrace of those whose

duty it is to bear the sword of Justice ; and my ears evidenced the oaths and blasphemies when stepping into the stores, and nothing said of God or religion ; and I doubt not that men of reason, candor, and judgment would unite in the truth of what I have asserted."

Mead was not alone in his opinion of this town. Lorenzo Dow writes in his journal after a visit : "Lynchburg was a deadly place for the worship of God."

But this seat of Satan at length felt the power of God. Five years after the scenes described above, the revival of 1804 broke out, and religion gained a hold in Lynchburg which it has never lost. We condense an account of this gracious work from Mead's journal :

"In 1804, on my way from Georgia to the General Conference at Baltimore, I sent an appointment by Lorenzo Dow, to manage a camp-meeting in my native county, Bedford, and which was accordingly held in the month of March at Timber Ridge, at which fifty souls were converted. Having an appointment also in the Mason's Hall, in Lynchburg, the old battle-ground, I preached and had a melting, solemn time. I preached also in Amherst, a short distance from town ; the work here was powerful, and sixteen were converted. I determined, as I had a little time to spare, to return to town and preach again, and in doing so in the Masons' Hall, eight souls were converted. I repeated the same the night following, and ten souls professed conversion ; and so on in town and country, until hundreds were

awakened and converted, and a society of above one hundred members formed in Lynchburg; and so, under God, I gained the victory over my adversary the devil, and his agents, my spiritual adversaries."

Among the older Methodists in Lynchburg who greatly assisted the travelling preachers in this good work we may mention Rev. Samuel Mitchell, Rev. William Peters Martin, and Rev. James Rucker, local preachers, and George Sullivan, William Heath, and other valuable and zealous lay members. The wives of these good men must be recorded as faithful mothers in our Israel, who labored day and night for the success of Christ's kingdom. The name of Elizabeth Martin is one of the brightest on the pages of Methodist history in England or America. She was an eminent saint, and through her long, happy and useful life, was regarded by all who knew her as a Christian of the greatest purity and the highest spiritual attainments. We reserve a more extended notice of her character for its appropriate place in the course of this narrative.

The infant Society now bent all their energies toward the erection of a house of worship. Those who had means came forward with their money; Stith Mead gave liberally himself, and worked hard to increase the subscriptions. Dow, in his journal, says: "My friends in Lynchburg asked, 'What shall be done with the profits of your Chain?' which they computed at five hundred dollars. I replied, 'I give the profits to build a brick chapel in Lynchburg for the Methodists, reserving only the privilege of preaching in it when not occupied by them, and whilst my con-

duct shall continue as unexceptionable as it is now.'" Whether his conditional offer of this liberal donation was accepted, we do not know. The building was commenced in 1804; it was of brick, forty-six by thirty-six feet, and was situated on the spot so long honored as the site of the first Methodist Church in Lynchburg. The enterprise did not advance as rapidly as its friends had hoped. Near the close of the year, Thomas Wiatt, the class-leader, wrote to Mead, in Georgia: "Our meeting-house progresses but slowly. I do not, however, yet feel discouraged, and will do all in my power to encourage the workmen to go on." The following year Mead was transferred from Georgia, and placed on the Richmond District. He found the Church still incomplete, and at once drew up and published an appeal to the Methodists in the district to aid in the good work. He says: "The walls of the house are raised and almost inclosed, and I hope in a short time it will be ready to accommodate one thousand people to hear the gospel preached." By such appeals, and his own advances of money, by which he embarrassed himself to some extent, this zealous man soon had the satisfaction to see the house finished and ready for the worship of God. From this time until set off as a station, Lynchburg became one of the regular appointments of the Bedford Circuit.

It was during the previous year that Lorenzo Dow made his appearance in Virginia; he passed rapidly through, on his way to the South. In the early part of this year he returned, and labored with great success in different parts of the State. As the name of

this eccentric man is associated with some of the most powerful revivals that prevailed at this period in Virginia, a sketch of his life and character will not be inappropriate.

He was born in Coventry, Connecticut, October 16, 1777. His parents, he tells us, "were very tender toward their children, and endeavored to educate them well, both in religion and common learning." He was religiously impressed at the early age of four years. While at play with several children of the same age he "suddenly fell into a muse about God, and heaven and hell," and became so absorbed that he left his companions and went into the house. His religious convictions clung to him as he increased in years. When about twelve, he had a severe spell of illness, in which he suffered greatly, being sometimes unable to lie down for a week together. His mind now became greatly distressed by dreams. One night the prophet Nathan appeared to him, and when he asked him how long he should live, the reply was, "Until you are two-and-twenty." This threw him into a fearful state of alarm. His next dream was of John Wesley, who seemed to appear suddenly before him at midday, old and feeble, and leaning on a staff.

"Do you ever pray?" was the question of the old man.

"No," replied Dow.

"You must," said Wesley, and then departed. Again he reäppeared: "Do you ever pray?"

"No," was again the reply.

"After he departed I went out of doors and was

taken up by a whirlwind above the skies. At length I saw through a mist of darkness and across a gulf, a glorious place, in which was a throne of ivory, overlaid with gold, and God sitting upon it, and Jesus at his right hand, and angels and glorified spirits celebrating praise. The angel Gabriel came to the verge of heaven with a trumpet in his right hand, and cried to me with a loud voice to know if I desired to get there. I told him I did.

"Said he, 'Return to the earth and be faithful, and you shall come in the end.'

"The beautiful vision then vanished; he rapidly descended to earth; and again the old man appeared before him.

"'Do you pray?'

"I told him I did.

"'Then be faithful, and I will come and let you know again.'"

This dream deeply impressed his heart; he began to weep, and to pray for the pardon of his sins. He read the Bible, but to him it was a sealed book. He went about asking this person and then another to explain it to him, but all in vain; they were as ignorant as himself. He wished he had lived in the days of the prophets, that he might have had sure guides. "Thus did many months of sorrow roll heavily away." Still he read and thought and prayed. But now a new trouble seized him. In his reflections the thought arose, "that the state of all was unalterably fixed by God's eternal decrees." He at once wrote himself *reprobate*. Hope fled, despair seized him,

and he determined, by his own hand, to close a wretched life.

Loading a gun, he withdrew to a secluded spot, fully resolved on his dreadful purpose. As he was about to pull the trigger, a solemn thought darted into his mind: "Stop and consider what you are about; if you end your life, you are undone forever; but if you omit it a few days longer, it may be that something will turn up in your favor." This gave him a ray of hope, and he returned home, grateful that he had been withheld from the awful deed. About this time there was much talk of the Methodist preachers who began to appear in that part of New England. Dow, with others was led by curiosity to attend a Methodist meeting.

The preacher was Hope Hull; his text was, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

"I thought," says Dow, "he told me all that ever I did."

The next day he preached again; the sermon was powerful, the application overwhelming.

"Pointing his finger towards me he made this expression:

"Sinner, there is a frowning Providence above your head, and a burning hell beneath your feet, and nothing but the brittle thread of life prevents your soul from falling into endless perdition. But, says the sinner, what must I do? You must pray. But I can't pray. If you don't pray, then you'll be damned, and, as he brought out the last expression, he either stamped with his foot on the box on which

he stood, or smote with his hand on the Bible, which came like a dagger to my heart. I came near falling backward from my seat, but saved myself by catching hold of my cousin who sat by my side, and I durst not stir for some time for fear I should tumble into hell."

His distress of mind greatly increased, and he cried night and day for pardon. He went the same day to a funeral, but durst not look on the corpse for fear of becoming one himself, nor come near the grave for fear of falling in and being buried alive. Night brought greater terrors before him. After struggling several hours in prayer he fell into a slumber, but an awful dream made his whole frame to quake with terror.

Two devils, he thought, entered the room, seized him, bound him with chains and flew off with him through the window; they bore him a great distance and laid him down on a spot of ice; "the weaker devil then flew off in flames of fire," while the stronger one set out to carry him down to hell.

"In my struggle," he writes, "I waked up; and oh! how glad I was that it was only a dream."

Again he poured out his soul in prayer, but he thought he heard the voice of God, saying, "take the unprofitable servant and cast him into outer darkness.'"

"I put my hands together," he says, "and cried in my heart, 'the time has been, that I might have had religion; but now it is too late; mercy's gate is shut against me and my condemnation forever sealed. Lord, I give up; I submit, I yield, I yield; if there

be any mercy in heaven for me, let me know it; and if not, let me go down to hell and know the worst of my case.' As the words flowed from my heart, I saw the Mediator step in, as it were, between the father's justice and my soul, and these words were applied to my mind with great power. 'Son, thy sins which are many, are forgiven thee, thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace."

"The burden of sin and guilt and the fear of hell vanished from my mind, as perceptibly as a hundred pound weight from a man's shoulder; my soul flew out in love to God, to his ways, to his people, and to all mankind."

Dow soon felt that he must preach the gospel, but he shrunk from the task with dread. He felt that he would rather spend his days in some remote part of the earth than to go forth as a preacher. He was as miserable as when he was seeking the forgiveness of his sins.

He writes: "Filled with horror and darkness while awake, with fearfulness and frightful dreams by night for near the space of four weeks, when one night I was awakened by surprise, and in idea there were represented to my view, two persons; the one by the name of Mercy with a smiling countenance, who said to me, 'If you will submit, and be willing to go and preach, there is mercy for you (he having a book in his hand,) the other by the name of Justice with a solemn countenance, holding a drawn, glittering sword over my head added, 'If you will not submit you shall be cut down; now or never.'"

He now decided to obey the call at all hazards; his

family gave him no encouragement, but still he felt that a dispensation of the gospel was committed to him and that he must preach on the peril of his soul. He soon began to exercise in public, under the direction of Jesse Lee and his co-laborers in New England, but the eccentricities of his character, even at that early period, made an unfavorable impression on the minds of his brethren, and at the end of three months he received a formal dismissal from Lee in the following words:

"We have had brother Lorenzo Dow, the bearer hereof, travelling on Warren Circuit, these three months past. In several places he was liked by a great many people; at other places he was not liked so well, and at a few places they were not willing that he should preach at all; we have therefore thought it necessary to advise him to return home for a season, until a further recommendation can be obtained from the Society and preachers of that circuit."

JESSE LEE, Elder.

This distressed him greatly, he writes:

"I could easier have met death than that discharge; two or three handkerchiefs were soon wet with tears; my heart was broke. I expostulated, and besought him for further employment, but apparently in vain. The next morning, as we were about parting, he said; 'if you are so minded, you may come to Greenwich Quarterly Meeting, next Sunday, on your way home.'"

Dow however, felt that he could not be silent and whether formally authorized or not, he embraced every

opportunity to call sinners to repentance. Four times he tells us, he was sent home; he was rejected at several Conferences, but in 1798, having "obtained a letter of recommendation signed by above thirty local preachers, stewards, and class-leaders, concerning his useful and moral conduct," he was received on trial.

He continued to labor for about two years in the regular itinerant work, when the low state of his health, and his roving disposition, led him to determine on a sea voyage. He accordingly sailed from Canada for Ireland, and after a boisterous passage reached that country, where he at once resumed his ministerial work, with marked success. He returned to America after an absence of nearly two years, with renewed health and was continued in the Conference on trial. He was sent to a circuit, his name being omitted in the Minutes. But it was impossible for Dow to confine himself to the limits of any circuit, he was constitutionally a cosmopolite. His health again failing, he resolved on a visit to the South, and after a short voyage landed at Savannah.

His travels through the United States may now be said to have begun. He was not regarded as a Methodist preacher, though he labored zealously in connection with the regular itinerants, and was thoroughly Armenian in doctrine. He became an independent evangelist, erratic in his movements, eccentric in his character to the verge of monomania, as some thought, yet, it must be confessed, accomplishing a vast amount of good. No man of his day, more powerfully impressed the multitudes that crowded to hear

him preach. There was much about his person and manner to excite the wonder and command the attention of his hearers. His spare form and solemn air, his long hair and beard, his rather clownish habits, the suddenness of his appearance and disappearance, the sharp, loud "HARK!" with which he often began his sermons, all conspired to give him an air of mystery wherever he was seen. His sermons, it is said, were often mere rhapsodies, and he not unfrequently took some trite motto or aphorism for a text, but there was an admixture of truth in all his harangues, that reached the conscience and aroused the feelings of his hearers. Many looked upon him as inspired, and it must be acknowledged that his peculiarities rather tended to deepen than remove this conviction.

The period of his appearance was extremely favorable to his success. The great revival which broke out in the West was still sweeping through the land; camp-meetings were everywhere held; the minds of the people were constantly on the stretch, looking for greater and more wonderful displays of Divine power. The preaching was chiefly of a hortatory character; the multitudes swayed and bent before the truth like the forests before a mighty wind; the wicked, no less than the godly, were often seized with those strange physical affections already described, and either fell to the ground or fled with alarm from the place of devotion. In the midst of these scenes Dow began his career. He was unlike any man that had ever passed through the land. His appointments were usually made for three, six, or twelve months in advance, and at the very hour of

the day, nay, often at the very moment, the form of the wonderful man was seen striding through the crowd to the pulpit, or to the rude stand under the trees. It was a common thing for him to have a chain of appointments extending along a route of a thousand miles, not one of which he failed to reach. It was immaterial with him whether he preached from a ship, a rock, a fallen tree, or a table in the street, or in the fields; in private houses, in churches, from the platforms of camp-meetings, any where, every where, he proclaimed the truth in his own peculiar and startling manner.

He was certainly an aggressive preacher. He had suffered, as we have seen, from the harsh doctrines of Calvinism, and he seems to have almost claimed a special call to attack "the A-double-L-part men," as he called them. He was once prosecuted and convicted for a libel on a clergyman, and was imprisoned for a short time, but he was no sooner free than he went forward in the same undeviating course. Perhaps no man was ever more vividly remembered by the masses of the people, than Lorenzo Dow. In nearly all the States the old people have stamped their recollections of this eccentric genius on the minds of their children and grand-children. The record of his oddities would fill a volume. Almost every man that ever heard him preach can relate a characteristic anecdote. One will tell how, as the congregation anxiously awaited his appearance, he suddenly darted through the crowd, ran into the pulpit, and rising with a huge old silver watch in his hand, held it up before the people, and exclaimed in a sharp, loud

voice, "WATCH!" this one word being his text. Another will relate how on a certain occasion, while a vast and confused crowd were awaiting his coming, he suddenly leaped on a table, and with a stamp of his foot and a clapping of his hands, exclaimed, "HUSH!" instantly awing the multitude into silence, and at once launching out into his discourse; another will tell how Dow at a great meeting pointed out in the congregation a poor backslider, and so minutely described the circumstances of his fall that the poor man fell trembling to the ground as if a prophet had spoken to him; another will describe a scene in which Dow finding the church far too small to accommodate a tenth of the crowd collected about it, would march with a negro before him bearing a table to some old field, with the whole congregation at his heels, and mounting his temporary stand, preach and depart without saluting a single human being.

There is no doubt that his extensive travels and intercourse with all classes of society, together with his natural shrewdness, had given him a keen perception of human nature, enabled him, indeed, to read character with astonishing accuracy; and his frequent exhibition of this peculiar talent gave ground for the belief in the minds of many uncultivated persons, that he really possessed the power of discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. A case in point is related by one who became a successful preacher. He was at the time of the incident quite young, and and painfully exercised about his call to the ministry. "Dow," he writes, "was to preach in my neighborhood. I had never seen him, nor he me; but hear-

ing that he was peculiarly pious, before I started to church I retired to the woods and prayed that God would give me a token by him. I went; the congregation being too large for any house, he mounted a block in the street. I was standing at his side, somewhat behind him. About midway of his sermon he began to talk on the ministry, and finally turned round, and pointing at me, said, 'There stands a young man that the Lord intends to make a preacher of, if he will but go home and get more religion.' Truly, had the earth opened under my feet, I could not have felt much more consternation than I did on that occasion."

The solution of this case is quite easy, and the same might be said of others stranger than this, provided we knew the circumstances connected with them.

Dow was perhaps affectedly singular; innocently so, we may hope, believing that he could thus more deeply impress the minds of his hearers on the great subject of religion. On one occasion he came in his journey to a farmer's kitchen, and asked for a piece of dry bread. The daughter ran in and told her mother, who was sick, that a strange looking man, with long hair, long beard, and a book under his arm, wanted a piece of bread. He was urged to stay to dinner, but he declined; receiving the piece of bread, he went to a small stream, where he sung a hymn, prayed, then dipped his bread in the water, ate it, and went on his way. At another time he was found at a farmer's gate, leaning his head against the post, as if weary and faint. He was kindly in-

vited to the house by the proprietor. Dow accepted the invitation, and told them if they would notify their neighbors he would preach for them that evening. This was done, and he preached on the words, "I was a stranger, and ye took me in; hungry, and ye fed me."

A great number of anecdotes yet linger among us in connection with the career of this singular man. Some of them have the air of incredibility and extravagance when related of a minister of the gospel, but when we remember the notorious eccentricities of Dow, we shall be disposed to receive them as true.

He once fell into a dispute with a learned physician who was an idealist. Dow strove to convince him that there were realities in nature, but in vain; to all his arguments there came the same reply, "'Tis but the force of imagination." At length the doctor, with an air of much self-importance, laid his pipe on the table, and turning toward the window, as he sat in his arm chair, said, "There, Mr. Dow," pointing to the opposite side of the street, "is a wagon as I imagined, but it is all the force of——"

Before he could finish the sentence Dow took up the pipe, which still held a live coal, and emptied the contents into the doctor's boot.

"What on earth are you about!" he exclaimed, instantly seizing the boot with both hands.

"O nothing but imagination," said Dow, coolly; nothing but imagination!" and immediately departed, leaving the doctor to dress his imaginary wound. At his next appointment his subject was, "The force of imagination."

The story of his finding the stolen axe is well known. The scene of this anecdote is laid in Maryland. As he rode up to one of his appointments, a poor man met him, and with a rueful face informed him that some one had stolen his axe, and begged that he would be good enough to tell him where it was. Dow assured him that he had no power of knowing such things; but he would not be put off; he was sure the preacher could find his axe if he would. At length, moved by his entreaties, Dow promised to do the best he could for him.

"Do you suspect any one of stealing it?" said Dow.

"Yes," replied the man, "I think I know the person, but cannot be certain."

"Will he be at meeting?"

"Yes, sir, he is sure to be there."

Dow said no more, but picking up a good sized stone, took it with him into the pulpit and placed it on the desk in full view of the congregation. Of course the people were sadly puzzled to know the meaning of this. After closing his sermon, he took up the stone, and said to the audience: "Some one has stolen an axe belonging to Mr. A., a poor man—the thief is here—he is before me now, and I intend, after turning round three times, to hit him on the head with this stone." He then turned slowly round twice; the third time he turned with great force, as if he intended to hurl the stone into the midst of the congregation. Instantly a man dodged his head behind the pew. "Now," said Dow, "I will expose you no further; but if you don't leave that axe to-night where you got it, I will publish you to-morrow."

The axe was promptly returned. The truth of this story has been vouched for.

A much more amusing anecdote is related of Dow, which so well accords with his character that we are are strongly inclined to give it full credence.

After a long and tiresome journey he stopped about nightfall at the door of a country tavern in Western Virginia. He retired to his apartment, but was much disturbed by a party of revellers who sat at their cups and cards until a late hour. Near midnight one of the company discovered that he had lost his pocket book, and a search was proposed. The landlord here remarked that Lorenzo Dow was in the house, and that if the money had been lost there, he could certainly find it. The suggestion was adopted at once, and Dow was aroused and requested to find the rogue. As he entered the room he glanced searchingly around, but could see no signs of guilt on any face. The loser was in great trouble and begged Dow to find his money.

"Have any left the room since you lost your money," said Dow.

"None, none," replied the man.

"Then," said Dow, turning to the landlady, "go and bring me your large dinner pot."

This excited no little astonishment, but as they accorded to him supernatural powers, the order was promptly obeyed, and the pot placed in the centre of the room.

"Now," said Dow, "go and bring the old chicken-cock from the roost."

The amazement grew apace; however, the old

rooster was brought in, placed in the pot, and securely covered.

"Let the doors be now fastened, and all the lights put out," said Dow; this was done.

"Now," said he, "every person in the room must rub his hand hard against the pot, and when the guilty hand touches the cock will crow."

All then came forward and rubbed or pretended to rub against the pot, but the cock did not crow.

"Let the candles be now lighted; there is no guilty person here; if the man ever had any money he must have left it in some other place," said Dow.

"But stop," he exclaimed suddenly, "let us now examine the hands." This was of course the main point in the whole affair. It was found that one man had not rubbed against the pot. "There," said Dow, pointing to the man with *clean hands*, "there is the man who picked your pocket." The thief at once confessed and gave up the money.

Such are specimens of the anecdotes which abound in the history of this singular man. We close this sketch with a brief summary of Dow's character, which we find in the preface to his published works.

"His eccentricities and style of preaching attracted great attention, while his shrewdness and quick discernment of character gave him no inconsiderable influence over the multitudes that attended his ministry. He travelled extensively in England and Ireland, and repeatedly visited almost every portion of the United States. He was a preacher for more than thirty years, and it is probable that more persons heard the gospel from his lips than any other man

since the days of Whitefield. He wrote several books, particularly a history of his own life, so singularly eventful, and full of vicissitudes. His purity of purpose and benevolence of character, can hardly be questioned. He was a Methodist in principle, and though not in connection with that Church, was held in esteem by many of its members." Dow closed his erratic life at Georgetown, District of Columbia, on the 2d of February, 1834. He was buried in the city of Washington, and over his remains was placed a tombstone, bearing but two words,

LORENZO DOW.

The revival of this year (1804) was not confined to that portion of the State lying within the limits of the Virginia Conference. The northern tier of counties embraced in the Baltimore Conference were greatly blessed with the outpourings of the Spirit.

At Alexandria, where the Baltimore Conference held its session in April, there was a gracious season. "At this Conference," says Henry Smith, "Bishop Asbury dedicated the new Methodist Church," and it was doubly consecrated by the conversion of a number of souls. "When a certain brother's case," says the same writer, "came before the Conference for admission on trial, one of the preachers said, 'But he is married.' Asbury replied, 'What of that? perhaps he is better for it. Better take preachers well married, than be at the trouble of marrying them after you get them."

Father Smith has left us in his "Recollections"

some interesting notices of the work in the Winchester Circuit. At Shackleford there was a good work, and many were gathered into the Church. At Middletown "the preachers had preached for some time, but could get no congregation; but now the people began to come out to hear a poor, noisy backwoods preacher: and many hardened sinners were converted, and some notorious backsliders were reclaimed." At "Saddler's" they had a precious time, and the Society was greatly revived. At "Haggon's," in the pine hills, the power of the Lord attended the word; many wept, some cried aloud for mercy, and the Lord's people were very much encouraged. At H. Coe's he had a peculiar scene. "It was night and rainy, but we had a crowd of sinners—some drunk. I preached with liberty, and in my zeal, said that the Lord would convert some one there that night. We labored on awhile, but the power of darkness was great, and some disposed to be disorderly; so I dismissed the congregation, retired into another room, and threw myself on a bed quite exhausted, and wept on account of the wickedness of the people, and also my rashness in predicting that the Lord would convert some soul there that night. All was silence in the room where the meeting had been held, and I thought the people were gone; but when I came out, I found twelve or fifteen still there, and in tears. I spoke a few words, sung and prayed again, and the Lord shed his Holy Spirit upon us. Some cried aloud to the Lord for mercy, and four or five were soundly converted. Here they threatened to bring whiskey, and if I would not drink, they would fun-

nel me and make me drink; but none of their threats were ever executed. Some were absolutely afraid of me, and said, 'He has been to the West where he learned the art of knocking them down; for before he came home there was none of it.' I preached at my father's one Sunday afternoon; the house was crowded. A blooming, gay, young lady came in, and took a seat near where I stood. Her smiling countenance seemed to say, I am proof against your art. I thought, Perhaps you may weep before I am done. I had not got near through my sermon before she trembled, and fell off her seat, crying for mercy. The people were much alarmed; some pushed for the door, others stood trembling, and those out of doors looked frightened. The young lady found peace, and went home rejoicing."

"At Mr. Clark's, in a place they called 'Poverty Hollow,' we had a powerful time. I never saw people more affected under preaching; some could not refrain from crying out. I went among them, and spoke to all that were in my way. One poor sinner was dreadfully offended, and said, 'I do not want you to talk to me.' He said when he went out, that he never would hear me preach again, but was there again that day, four weeks, and got powerfully awakened and turned to the Lord."

At Front Royal, so great was the interest among the people, that he writes: "I have seldom seen so great a time of God's converting power.'

At Winchester, Milburn's, and Crum's, there was a gracious time, and many were converted. "This brother Crum was a German preacher; his religious

experience was a little singular. When under strong conviction he went to a Quarterly Meeting at Milburn's, where there was a gracious work. Some got converted. He said, 'I prayed in Dutch, I am Dutch, and must get converted in Dutch. These are all English people, and they get converted in English. I prayed, and prayed in Dutch, but could not get the blessing. At last I felt willing to get converted in English or Dutch, as the Lord pleased. Then the blessing came, and I got converted in English.'"

The faithful labors of this man of God resulted in the addition of three hundred members to the Church in the Winchester Circuit. The scenes here described were such as occurred over the whole field of Methodism in those early days. The life of the itinerant preacher was full of thrilling adventures, and the veterans who, like the venerable Henry Smith, have passed into another generation, find their serene old age cheered and brightened by the reminiscences of past years of glorious toil.

CHAPTER XIII.

The two veterans—Conference of 1805, at Edmund Taylor's—Pastoral Address—Asbury and Whatcoat in Virginia—Joseph Carson—Recollections of Methodism in Winchester—Labors of Mr. Carson—A Quarterly Meeting—Camp-meeting—Persecution—Awful judgment on a scoffer—Louis R. Fechtig—Conference of 1806—Benjamin Devany—Anecdotes—Work of grace among the Churches—Impressive scenes—Conference of 1807—Proposal of the New York Conference for calling a General Conference—Rejected by the Conference—Richard Whatcoat—His labors and death—Edward Cannon—John Early—Labors of the early preachers—Conference of 1808—Trials of an Itinerant—General Conference of 1808.

THE Virginia Conference for 1805 assembled at Edmund Taylor's, Granville county, North Carolina, on the 1st of March.

The two veterans, Asbury and Whatcoat, reached the line of Virginia early in February, on their way to the seat of Conference. They were both feeble old men, but strong in faith and in the power of the Holy Ghost. They knew how to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ. "We stemmed the northwest wind," writes Asbury, "twenty miles to cross the awful Roanoke. For a mile and a half from the ferry, the fences were swept away. After crossing the river, which had fallen when they reached it, they "rode thirty-two miles to Joseph Penners, Northampton, without seeing the inside of a house."

Asbury was sick and "most severely penetrated with cold." Reaching Suffolk, they preached, then pushed on through water, mud and mire to Portsmouth." From this place, Asbury writes: "We had a meeting of the official members for business; they unanimously wished to have a stationed preacher: this was a great difficulty last year. Our chapel has been enlarged to sixty feet by thirty. I advised the addition of galleries. We met the official members of the Norfolk society. Here are some difficulties and more poverty; but the work progresses here as well as at Portsmouth, where the society has grown and prospered under the care of John Potts." Returning on their route they preached again at Suffolk; at Murphy's they found the work reviving; "a new house was in preparation." "The place is too strait," writes Asbury, "we must make room for them to dwell."

They rejoiced to find that God had wrought powerfully at Blunt's and Benn's; at the former place the people were preparing a large house of worship. The hearts of the good Bishops were gladdened to find that in this part of the work many who had been led away by O'Kelly were returning to the Church. "General Wells and family," says Asbury, "have returned to us. Willis Wells is coming back from following O'Kelly, besides twenty other members who had been drawn away; they profess to have had enough of him. Mr. O'Kelly has come down with great zeal, and preaches three hours at a time, upon government, monarchy, and episcopacy; occasionally varying the subject by abuse of the Methodists, calling

them aristocrats and tories; a people, who, if they had the power, would force the government at the sword's point. Poor man! The Methodists have but two of their very numerous Society members of Congress, and until these Democratic times we never had one. I question if, in all the public legislative bodies in the seventeen United States, there are more than twenty members Methodists. No; our people are a very independent people, who think for themselves; and are as apt to differ in politics, (so do the preachers) and divide at the hustings, as those of any other denomination; and surely they are not seekers of the offices of this world's profit or honor; if they were, what might they not gain in many parts of the United States? Whilst one rails at us, others who are always fond of fishing in troubled waters, take those who are already in our net; or, hunting on forbidden ground, pick up our crippled game; see what believers their Church is composed of!"

Passing through Surry, Sussex, Prince Edward, Brunswick, Greensville and Mecklenburg counties, the Bishops crossed the Roanoke at Taylor's Ferry, and rode twenty miles to Edmund Taylor's the seat of the Conference.

"We felt a little serious," writes Asbury, "thinking our elder children and strong sons would leave us by location; and that we should have none but old, tottering men, and green, unpracticed boys to take care of the plantation; but we have a great husbandman, Jesus, and a good God."

The Conference opened on Friday, the 1st of March, and remained in session a week; fourteen

preachers were received on trial; four Deacons and five Elders were ordained; four located, none had died.

The membership was reported at 14,247 whites, and 3, 573 colored; the increase among the former was 1,065, but there was a decrease among the latter of 184.

The deficencies of the preachers amounted to $561.30; to meet these the Conference received from all sources $349.39; of this sum only $86 were collected on the circuits; $100 were received from the Book Fund; and $20 from the Chartered Fund, the remainder was made up by private donations, and small legacies from deceased preachers.

There were 33 appointments supplied by 55 preachers.

The Minutes are for the first time signed by Francis Asbury as President and Alexander McCaine as Secretary.

From this Conference the following address was sent "To all the official Brethren—Local Preachers, Class Leaders and Stewards in their Quarterly Meeting Conferences in the Districts and Circuits of their Charge."

"*Dearly Beloved in the Lord:*

"Grace and peace attend you, with our salutation to all saints.

"Possibly in your local situations you have not taken perfect knowledge of what God has done for us as a society in the space of thirty-five years. We have not only planted, but have made a very

gracious progress of the gospel in the seventeen United States, and in the Territorial settlements, as also in the Canadian Provinces, as may be seen by the Annual Minutes. 'What hath God wrought!' We contemplate the happy hundreds already gone to glory; and more than one hundred thousand now in fellowship with us; and the children and servants of our brethren must still greatly augment our charge; with these christianized and spiritualized, we might calculate on half a million of souls who stand in Church relation to us. Again, when we consider all those who as regularly attend our ministry as our own members, we might calculate on one million, probably one-sixth part of the inhabitants of these United States.

"What but a travelling ministry, and a very rapid one too, could have spread themselves over so great a part of this Western Continent in so short a time. We have upwards of 400 travelling and 2,000 local preachers, with exhorters, the latter a source whence we can draw supplies to replenish and strengthen our travelling ministry. O brethren, help us by all and every laudable means in your power; what should not men do and suffer for souls, after the example of Christ, and in obedience to his word Our local brethren can keep our congregations together by preaching in the absence of the travelling line; they can promote class-meetings, order and union among the Societies, they can see that none enter in among the flock, to pervert or draw away disciples after them. Our local brethren highly esteem the travelling plan; some of them have spent their happiest and most

useful days in the active work. The local ministry can help us greatly at camp and Quarterly Meetings; they can promote prayer-meetings; and when the work of God breaks out in a Society can nurse the good cause. When the travelling ministry are obliged to go on to their daily appointments, they can be always ready to fill their places. When modesty or self-diffidence prevails among the travelling preachers, and they hesitate to ask the people to contribute a mite, the local brethren can exhort and urge the Societies to give liberally to sustain those who might have been full, free and probably independent if they had tarried at home.

Indeed it is not possible to estimate the good that has been done since the sitting of the General Conference in May, 1804. From what has fallen under the notice of this Conference, it appears that between 200 and 300 camp and extraordinary meetings have been held, where from ten to fifteen, twenty, fifty, one hundred, two hundred, and, in one remarkable instance, four hundred souls have been converted. Who can conceive what may be done in twenty years to come?

O brethren, was there ever a time like this! Help, help by your prayers, preaching and purses. Many of our travelling ministry are married men, and do not receive above $82 per annum to support a wife and children; and whenever we have a surplus in our Conferences, we do not bank it or give it where there are no just claims, but send it on to the poorer Conferences in the more extreme parts of the North and East.

To conclude: such fields are opening, so many preachers to preach, and so many people to pray, and such multitudes to be converted, what shall we see in twenty years to come, if the travelling and local preachers are united, preaching the same doctrines, approving and enforcing the same discipline, and seeking by all lawful means ministerial and Christian union among themselves and all Christian ministers and societies? This living and walking as dear children, what will not a good and gracious God do for us?

FRANCIS ASBURY.

Signed in, and by order of Conference, 8th March, 1804."

No sooner had the Conference adjourned than Asbury and Whatcoat were again on the road. Their route lay through the Piedmont region of the State; every where they were joyfully received as the chief Pastors of the Church. This journey was attended with much suffering from the occasionally cold weather. "I find," says Asbury, "that nothing so interrupts my communion with God as the cold. I cannot keep my mind fixed when my whole system seems to be penetrated and stiffened with the cold wind." On their route they spent a day or two in Lynchburg. "I did not find my mind or body," writes Asbury, "or the circumstances of the chapel, or the state of the Society as I wished. We did not lose time. Brother Whatcoat spoke on Friday night. On Saturday I preached. On the Sabbath day I was very unwell. Brother Whatcoat preached

and administered the Sacrament. At three o'clock I was forced to duty by the wishes of the people. We had about one thousand or fifteen hundred people of the town and country." From Lynchburg they passed through Amherst, Albemarle, Fluvanna and Culpepper, crossed the Blue Ridge at Chester's Gap, and rested a day or two at Front Royal. On the 1st of April they opened the Baltimore Conference at Winchester, "sitting five days in great order and peace." Seventy-four preachers were present; they had preaching day and night, and "some souls were converted to God."

Among those received on trial at this Conference we find the name of Joseph Carson; a name that to this day fills an honorable place in the rolls of the itinerancy. Although originally admitted in the Baltimore Conference this pure and excellent man has been so long identified with the Virginia Conference that he merits more than a passing notice in our narrative. It is our good fortune to be able to give an account of Father Carson's early life and Christian experience, kindly furnished by himself at the request of the author.

"My earliest recollections of Methodism in Winchester, (his native town) date back to 1791, when I was but six years old. About this time my brother, Brattie Carson, joined the Church, and I doubt not my youthful mind was more deeply impressed with the fact, from my distress as his cutting short his elegant suit of hair, which it was then fashionable to wear n a queue; but there was not room for a man and queue both in the Methodist Church in those days.

My brother, George A. Reid, and James Walls, were, I believe, almost the first male members in the town; he was the steward, and Ried and Walls became local preachers. The first travelling preacher of whom I have any personal knowledge was John Talbot [it is *William* in the Minutes]; he was a faithful, dauntless man of God, and feared not to deliver his Master's message while stones and eggs were being hurled at his head. I still remember with what veneration I regarded him of whom I had heard it said, that while he was preaching, the blood was trickling from gashes on his face. He used sometimes to preach on my brother's lot under a tree, beneath whose spreading branches was a large rock which formed his pulpit. The houses of Mrs. Bowers and Messrs. Wall and Reid were also places of preaching and holding class and prayer meetings, which latter were often conducted by the wives of these brethren.

"The first time I ever saw Bishop Asbury he was standing on a table, on the green, preaching. About 1795, I think, they began a church but were not able to finish it for sometime. Philip Bruce and Leroy Cole, men dear to the hearts of many, even at this day, used to accompany the Bishop occasionally.

"Among the local preachers in the Valley I remember the names of Lewis Chastain, John B. Tilden, William Cravens, George A. Reid and James Wall; and of the prominent lay members, those of Samuel Calvert, Simon Lauck and James Newham. Enoch George, Nicholas Snethen, Thomas Lyell, Hamilton Jefferson, Jeremiah Browning and Stephen

G. Roszell, are also names around which cluster many associations of Methodism in this section of country.

"Our Quarterly Meetings used to be occasions of special interest, and were attended by persons from great distances, even 40 and 50 miles; they were always seasons of revival.

"I well remember the first one I ever attended; it was held at Shepherdstown in 1800. Seely Bunn was preacher in charge, Daniel Hitt, Presiding Elder. I went with Bros. Wall, Reid, Shields, and a number of ladies and gentlemen. I was not then a Christian, but was considerably interested on the subject of religion. We were on horseback, and as we approached the town, we formed a procession, the ministers being in front, and began to sing; as we rode through the town singing, the people regarded us very curiously. Near this place lived Brothers Lafferty and Bunniston, men known for their zeal and piety."

Mr. Carson was licensed to preach by Henry Smith, in 1804, and the following year was admitted on trial.

He writes: "In March, 1805, the Baltimore Conference sat in Winchester, in an upper room of the house of George A. Reid, corner of Piccadilly and Braddock streets. My recommendation to that body having preceded me, I was admitted on trial with twenty-two others, of whom I am the only survivor. I was appointed to Wyoming circuit in Pennsylvania. Immediately after the close of Conference, in company with James Paynter, a man many years my senior, I set out from the home of my youth without the ex-

pectation of returning for at least two years. After about thirteen days' travel, through mud and marsh, swimming creeks and rivers, we reached the house of Christian Bournan, on the West Fork River opposite the village of Berwick. Here we were kindly received, and found a pleasant home during our stay on the circuit; it was one of our regular preaching places, for be it remembered there was not a Methodist Church on the circuit. Wyoming circuit then included all of Pennsylvania from the West Fork nearly to the boundary of New York. We had 32 appointments in 28 days, to reach which we travelled 400 miles, crossing eight mountains, and passing through Beech Swamp, fifty miles in length, which abounded in rattlesnakes.

"But this was by no means the worst feature. Our physical labor was of small moment when compared with the persecutions of every kind with which we met from the Universalists, Hell-Redemptionists, Seventh-Day Baptists, Free Will Baptists, Deists, Atheists, and sinners of all classes. Among the wealthy and refined very bitter opposition to Methodism existed, consequently our homes were among the poor, who were scarcely able to supply us with the necessaries of life, to say nothing of comforts; but they had kind hearts, and such as they had gave they unto us. Our food was of the coarsest kind and not the most cleanly. Breakfast generally consisted of coffee made of toasted corn bread, sometimes a little pickled pork, fried to a cracklin, and a scanty supply of bread; for dinner we had a few vegetables, and occasionally wild meat; supper was pretty much a repe-

tition of breakfast: tea was made of hemlock leaves sweetened with honey.

"The most of the houses were log cabins, covered with bark, straw or slabs; many of them contained but one room, which they used for everything, and in which the family and guests all lodged. The bedsteads were made by driving forks into the puncheon floors, placing poles in them and laying slabs across; a little straw, covered with a piece of coarse cloth served as the bed. Many a morning have I found a layer of snow forming my outer coverlet, for the roofs were too open to prevent its entrance. In only two settlements could we be at all comfortable for the first six months, but afterward a brighter prospect opened before us, and we were welcomed to many a fireside from which we had been excluded."

Of some of the meetings on this rough circuit he gives an interesting account.

"The first quarter passed without any cheering signs. The membership on the whole circuit numbered about four hundred, but of these we expelled forty before we received one. It was our purpose from the beginning to have class-meetings, and to conduct them according to the old Wesleyan style, with closed doors, but this was vehemently opposed by the people, and in some places by the members. I determined to try the effect of a general class, at which I interrogated every one in the room, and found, as I expected, that the object with many was to ridicule religion. I therefore resolved that closed doors we should have. At the next appointment after the services were concluded, I announced my views.

and requested all, except the Christians and those desiring to become such, to leave the room; most of them complied, but a few seemed inclined to test my determination. I repeated the request, but it was not heeded until I assured them that I was in earnest about this thing, and I had even to tell one man that if he did not go out, it would be because he was a stronger man than I. After continued exertions we carried our point, and these meetings were the scenes of many conversions."

Here is a picture of a Quarterly Meeting in those days:

"At our second Quarterly Meeting we concluded to begin on Friday and give them 'a long heat.' A great number came from a distance, but the people in the neighborhood objected to this departure from the established custom of beginning on Saturday; therefore but few of them came out. We preached in a barn, and the congregation, many of them not being able to get into the house, was seated on rocks, stumps and logs in the yard. After the sermon, many of the strangers came to me to know where they could stay; I replied, 'I really did not know, for as yet I had no invitation myself;' however, the ladies were disposed of after a while, but the men found lodging that night in the *hay mows*. On Saturday there was no visible effect. On Sunday, during the exhortation that followed the sermon, I saw a young lady evidently affected. I made my way to her, and very soon she was on her knees, and in a short time was happily converted. Soon I heard the whisper, 'Disorder! disorder!' running through the

congregation. 'We cannot submit to anything of this sort,' was the conclusion. Some complained to my colleague, and asked if he thought it was right. 'Of course I do,' he replied. 'Well,' said they, 'we have a stick in soak for him, and we will let him know that he shall not behave so among us. But he advised them to be quiet, saying 'he was *born in the fire*, and you may expect such things of him as long as he lives.' We intended protracting the meeting on Monday but the people would not submit to it. The young lady was the only convert, and she afterwards walked thirteen miles to join the Church; she was the first one we received on trial." At the next Quarterly Meeting they had fifteen converts, and a glorious work broke out which continued till the close of the year.

Young Carson appointed a class-meeting at Berwick, on the opposite side of the river from the scene of this revival. "I took with me," he says, "*two boat loads* of young converts, and we had a delightful and profitable meeting in which several were converted. After the close of the exercises, as we were leaving the house, a man came to me in great distress and said, 'Please pray for me.' 'Well,' said I, 'there is no better time than the present; kneel down and I will pray for you;' so down in the street we knelt and prayed together, and he was happily converted."

At the close of the year they counted 600 converted, and 400 added to the Church on the old circuit, and the remaining 200 placed in a new two week's circuit. At the Conference the Bishop ap-

pointed a preacher to this new field with the remark: "Two weeks work is ready for you; go and dig up the other two."

A camp-meeting scene of thrilling interest has also been described by the same hand.

"During the year I attended one of brother Fry's camp meetings. The camp ground presented a very different appearance from those of the present day. The tents were not large, commodious rooms, but only sheets, blankets, &c., stretched on poles; the seats were logs, stumps, stones or anything we could get; the stand was somewhat after the present style, but there was no altar. The food was of the plainest kind, and for the most part cold—the tables then groaned not beneath a sumptuous load. Brothers Fry, Pernell, Wilson, and Paynter were there. We met with strong opposition and much persecution; not only threats but stones were hurled at us, but their efforts to harm us were frustrated in an almost miraculous manner. On the night of the second or third day, a party of rowdies determined to break up the meeting. While brother Pernell was preaching the rocks came pretty thick, and one striking the lamp post cut a gash in it which must have been fatal had it been on a man's head; he barely escaped it by the gesture which he happened to make at that moment.

"I was to exhort after his sermon, and when I arose I told them that I supposed it was their intention to make a martyr of some one of us, and I reckoned I could be spared as well as any of my brethren; 'and now,' said I, 'I will stand here five minutes by

my watch, and receive all the stones that you will throw; and drawing my watch from my pocket, I stood with it in my hand. Not a sound was heard, not a stone was thrown; an awful stillness pervaded the ground. At the expiration of five minutes I spoke: 'Will you now allow me to deliver one more message?' I then began my exhortation and before I finished men and women were falling upon their knees all through the congregation. After I was done I told them I would wait five minutes again as at first for their volley of stones but none came. Brothers Pernell, Wilson and myself then left the stand to talk and pray with the penitents. While thus engaged we observed, at a little distance, a group of men, and it was proposed that we should all repair to that spot. When we reached the place we found a man kneeling down, who seemed to be weeping and in great distress. Without speaking to any of the group I turned to the preachers and said, 'Brethren, I have never felt the powers of darkness so sensibly. I feel as if the Devil was here.' 'That is just the way I feel,' said Pernell; 'I think the Devil *is* here; let us pray,' said Wilson, and lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, offered this prayer: 'O Lord God! if this man is sincere, convert his soul; if not, give us some proof of his hypocrisy. Amen.'

"Without speaking a word to any of them, we turned and walked off. In a short time a physician was sent for to see this very man. I went with him; we found him stretched upon the ground, apparently insensible. The doctor after feeling his pulse, said:

'I can do nothing for him; this is something I know nothing about; his arterial action is good, but he has no muscular action.' At 12 o'clock that night I visited him again, and found him in the same condition. About day break he recovered his strength sufficiently to take a piece of chalk from his pocket and write his confession on a board, which was nearly as follows: 'We had determined to break up this meeting, but finding that we could not scare the preachers by throwing stones at them, we concluded to have some fun. I was to be a mourner, —— was to pray for me, —— was to exhort; I was then to get converted and raise a Methodist shout, but just at that moment my speech and strength left me, and I am now in this condition.' He was the next morning borne on a litter to the village of Milton, about three miles distant. The meeting continued nearly a week and about fifty souls were converted. Before leaving the neighborhood I inquired about this unfortunate man, and was told that he could walk, but had never spoken, and that on the counters in the stores, and in different places he was ever writing his confession.

Many years afterward at a Camp Meeting in Rappahannock county I met with a lady who had heard this incident from the mouth of her father; he was an eye-witness, and to it he attributed his conversion."

The following year was also spent in Pennsylvania, and at the risk of moving in advance of our narrative, we give a few extracts from Mr. Carson's interesting communication. His field of labor was Carlisle

circuit, "embracing York, Adams, Cumberland, and parts of several other counties."

"The first of the year we had a little of the spice of persecution, but it did not last long. At Shippensburg the church was stoned while brother Paynter was preaching, and the intention to 'kill the young one the next time he came,' was publicly announced. I went, and while preaching I observed two ladies leave their seats and stand in the door which was just in front of the pulpit: they were both pious members of the Church. I knew nothing of what was going on out of doors, and thought this rather a singular movement, but said nothing; presently a man pushed by them and began to talk aloud; but a Presbyterian brother who was a magistrate requested him to be silent.

"Who are you?" demanded the man.

"If you interrupt this congregation I'll show you," answered he; and finding his threat insufficient, he ordered an officer to take him into custody.

"The mob in the yard attempted his rescue, but their efforts were defeated. He was next morning started to jail, but meeting his father who promised to be his security upon condition that he would go off, he was released. I met him a few days afterward with his knapsack on his back, an outcast from his home."

The following incident in reference to one of the most efficient and powerful preachers of the Baltimore Conference has a peculiar interest.

"During this year I preached several times in Hagerstown, Maryland; there Methodism had very few

friends. Louis R. Fechtig, who was afterward an eloquent preacher, was then an apprentice boy, living there. He had been converted a short time before, and was very zealous for our cause, and notwithstanding the heavy stripes with which he was beaten by both father and master, 'who were determined to whip Methodism out of him,' he would always light the church for me. He told me after he became a preacher, that his father once stood in the yard, for he would not go in a church, and listened to me preach from this text: 'Every one shall be salted with fire,' &c., and from that time he ceased to whip him for his religion."

Such are some of the incidents in the early life of Joseph Carson. But few men have toiled longer or more successfully in the cause of Christ. For more than sixty years, he has stood as a watchman on the walls of Zion; and yet he remains among us blessed with uncommon vigor and preaching with the zeal and fervor of his earlier years. He has seen the fathers one by one, pass away, and a new generation of people and preachers grow up around him; he has seen the Church which numbered not quite seventy-five thousand in the United States and Canada, swell her numbers to nearly two millions of souls.

Perhaps no man now living has seen more of the wonderful works of God in the fields of Methodism than he; and but few have been more highly honored of Christ as a successful preacher. Thousands of souls have been brought to God through his instrumentality; happy multitudes await his coming to the heavenly

Canaan, who will hail him as their spiritual father. Calmly, like a veteran warrior, he awaits the command to put aside his armor, and take the robe, the palm, the crown of a conqueror. He will reäppear in many interesting scenes in the further progress of our narrative.

The Conference for 1806 assembled at Norfolk on the 14th of February; fourteen preachers were received on trial; nine deacons and two elders were elected and ordained; seven located, none had died; the membership was reported at 15,697 whites, and 4,548 colored. The whole increase was 2,425.

The deficiencies of the preachers amounted to $514.24; from the circuits the following collections were reported: Greensville, $34.17; Mecklenburg, $12.83; Brunswick, $13.12; Roanoke, $19.55; Camden, $6.13; Amelia, $5.20; from the Chartered Fund $150; from the Book Concern $300; the deficiencies were more than met, and a small surplus left at the disposal of the Conference. Thirty-four appointments were reported; 63 preachers were stationed. The Conference was favored with the presence of both the bishops, Asbury and Whatcoat. Both Norfolk and Portsmouth were blessed with a gracious revival during the session. The church in Norfolk was used for preaching at 11 o'clock, at three, and at night every day during the Conference; the business sessions were held in an old wooden building on the lot adjoining the church, the school room of David Wright, the sexton. About forty persons were converted in each town during the meeting. An incident is related of this revival which shows the con-

troling power of grace in the human heart. One of the preachers had in his sermon given offence to a wicked man who supposed that special reference had been made to him in a very severe part of the discourse. When the preacher came out of the Church the man approached, charged him with insulting him, and seizing his nose wrung it violently. The preacher simply raised his hat, made him a polite bow, and walked into the Conference-room. The man slunk away abashed, plunged deeper into crime, and in the course of the year died by his own hand.

Of this Conference Asbury has a significant paragraph: "One member opposed all petitions from the people for Conference sittings; he also condemned all epistles from the sister Conferences, as being too long and pompous, and as likely to make innovations. He dictated an epistle himself by way of example, to show how epistles ought to be written. The Committee of Addresses wrote one, too, but it was rejected, as being too much like that of the objecting member, whose epistle was rejected as being too much like himself; the Conference voted that none should be sent." "Strange," adds the Bishop, "that such an affair should occupy the time of so many good men. Religion will do great things, but it does not make men Solomons."

Asbury was gladdened by the cheering prospects of the work. "We had preaching," he says, "morn, noon and night, large congregations and many souls engaged. We have a rich supply of preachers for every circuit."

Among the names that appear this year on the

Minutes for the first time is that of Benjamin Devany, and after sixty years of ministerial toil this name still stands on the roll of our Conference.

Benjamin Devany was born in Franklin county, North Carolina, on the 13th of March, 1788; he was converted in the fall of 1804 at a camp meeting held at a place called Partridge, in the same county. Having been admitted on trial, he was appointed to the Caswell circuit with Thomas Mann and Thomas Pinnell as his colleagues, and John Buxton as presiding elder. From a letter lying before us, we make some interesting extracts in reference to his early labors.

"John Buxton was admitted on trial in the Virginia Conference, in 1791, and was appointed to the Richmond District in 1804. He was a consistent, holy man of God; he was a little dictatorial in his official bearing; he had a fine voice, was an excellent singer, and eloquent and fervent in prayer. His sermons were sometimes deficient in point, and he did not always observe the rule, 'not to preach too long, or too loud.' But for his long, disinterested, and faithful labors his name should be remembered and honored by the Church of his choice. I will here relate a little incident which took place on the Conference floor between him and John C. Ballew. He brought a complaint against the latter, but of what character I do not now recollect. When he had stated his complaint and made such remarks as he thought pertinent, Ballew arose and replied, and in the close of his reply related an anecdote of a Frenchman, who ran out of his house with a red hot poker

in his hand, and said to a man who was passing, 'Vat will you give me not to burn you?' 'Nothing,' said the man. 'But vill you not pay me for heating ze poker?' said the Frenchman. 'No, you have *het* the poker for nothing, and you may cool it for nothing,' was the reply. Ballew then said in his eccentric way, 'Brother Buxton has '*het*' the poker for nothing, and he may cool it for nothing.'"

In consequence of the sickness of Mann, the charge of the circuit devolved upon Pinnell, who was a very genteel young man, "and dressed well for that time, but was regarded by some as rather starchy for a Methodist preacher."

"Caswell circuit was not one of the little *laborious* four week's circuits of the present day, with only four or six appointments; but it was in reality what it purported to be, a four weeks' circuit with but one rest day in each week."

Two facts I will here mention, which, so far as they are concerned, go to show that the former days were better than the latter—first, the uniform attention paid by the preachers to all the classes of their charge, and second, the members of the Church, and the people of the world, by their attendance at our week day appointments, showed that they more highly appreciated the Gospel than the people of the present day. It was a sad day for Methodism when our preachers so far compromised with the world as to neglect the meeting of the classes. [In this regret every true Methodist must concur.] A good many of our preaching places were in private houses, one of which was the residence of George Harris, the

honored father of Fletcher, who was then fifteen or sixteen years old. Fletcher joined the Conference some years after, and distinguished himself as an able and eloquent preacher. He drew large crowds after him whenever he preached; but his brilliant sun soon went down in death. George Harris, by industry and economy, lived well, and was happy as the head of a Christian family. He devoted much of his spare time to the improvement of his mind, and especially prided himself on his knowledge of the dictionary. I remember an illustrative anecdote of him and Edward Cannon, who succeeded me on this circuit. Cannon was a young man of promise, had a good mind, a retentive memory, and at times disposed to be mischievous. After his first visit to Harris', he determined to match the old gentleman in some of his pompous talk. Accordingly for the next four weeks he studied his dictionary and collected as many big words as he thought would serve his purpose, and arranged them in sentences, to throw out to his old friend. Upon his next visit, when the services were over, they both went out into the porch, where the following dialogue took place:

"Well, Brother Cannon, how have you been since I saw you?"

"Pretty well, Brother Harris, except a slight touch of lumbago."

"*Lumbago*—is that a proper word, Brother Cannon?"

"I reckon it is, Brother Harris."

"L-u-m-b-a-g-o, it can't be a proper word, Brother Cannon; Fletcher, bring me the dictionary."

Fletcher enters with the dictionary, and the word is found.

"Well, I am astonished Brother Cannon that I never saw this word before."

The triumph of Cannon was complete, and the mortification of Harris very great at being thus "*stumped* by a young man."

We shall be able in the course of this narrative, to give the reader other pleasing incidents and sketches from the pen of this venerable and beloved father in Israel. The weight of more than threescore years and ten seems to rest lightly upon him, his spirit is fresh and strong, his piety pure and fervent, and his genial manners make him a favorite in every circle. With his fellow veterans who yet linger in the field, he awaits the call to that city "that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

The year 1806 was signalized by many glorious revivals within the limits of the Virginia Conference.

At the numerous Camp Meetings the displays of Divine power were often so amazing as to strike terror into the hearts of the unbelievers.

At one of the meetings held at Hobb's Meeting House, in Brunswick county, there was a gracious outpouring of the Spirit; the Church was greatly revived and many sinners brought to God. Jesse Lee describes a singular case which he witnessed on this occasion:

"On Sunday night a young woman fell down and lay helpless. They bore her to a tent, and she lay

helpless and speechless through the night. Next morning I had a teaspoonful of water given her. About nine o'clock in the forenoon she revived and said, 'Love, love, love! Glory, glory, glory!' and then died away again, and appeared like a person in a sweet sleep. In the afternoon she was taken home in the same insensible state. Physicians were called in by her anxious parents, but they could not perceive that she had any bodily complaint, and believed her to be under the influence of supernatural power. They bled her but obtained only a few drops, they then applied a blister, but took it off in a little time. She lay in this condition until Tuesday night week, when she revived and spoke freely and sensibly, though in a very weak and feeble state. The next day she went about the house, and out of doors, just as she pleased, and was quite well and happy in God. She had been in that state for nine days and nights, and during all that time she ate nothing except such things as were poured into her mouth, and she took but very little of that. A greater part of the time she was sensible of everything done or said to her. For some days before she revived she knew all her friends that came to see her, and would answer any question by a nod or shake of the head, and in some cases would hold out her hand. When asked if she was happy, she would move her head by way of assent, and raise her eyes, and the tears would flow down her cheeks, which satisfied her friends that she was converted. When able to speak she said that the Lord had blessed her soul on the Monday after she was struck down, at which time she spoke and shouted,

'Love! love! love! Glory! glory! glory!' I saw her soon after she recovered from this ecstasy, and took her into Society, and had no doubt but she was truly happy in God. Many who saw her in her helpless condition were deeply affected, and some were brought to think seriously about their souls. Such a strange circumstance I do not remember to have known or read of before; and yet there was nothing like a trance, or any particular discovery of the other world professed by her."

At another Camp Meeting in the same county there was some success in the conversion of souls, but in the opinion of Lee the cause of truth was injured by the appearance of the Jerking, and other exercises, such manifestations being very uncommon in that section.

"One circumstance," he says, "contributed not a little to interrupt the harmony of the meeting, and retard the progress of the work, which was the wild enthusiasm displayed by a certain female not a member of our Church. Her exercises were such as to attract the attention of all present, and were of a character novel enough to do so; for she exhibited at some times the jerking exercise, at others the dancing exercise, and not unfrequently the barking exercise; and taking them altogether made as ridiculous a set of exercises, as ever attracted the gaze of a multitude."

In all ages of the Church, God has called some of his people to glorify him by sufferings. At one of Jesse Lee's preaching places he met a Christian whose case greatly excited his sympathy.

"It had been twenty years," he says, "since he was on his feet. He is perfectly stiff from his head to his feet. He can move his toes, has a tolerably good use of one arm, and can use the other a little, but cannot raise it to his head. He has the use of all his senses, but cannot move his head in any direction. He lies on his back continually, and has no power to change his posture, or to rest a weary limb. However, he has a hickory withe suspended over his bed, and by taking hold of it, he can raise himself and find a little relief and rest. He reads, sings, talks and shouts the praise of God with great solemnity."

This good man opened his house for the preaching of the gospel and was a happy illustration of the power of grace to give peace and joy in the depths of affliction. How glad to him the stroke of death that broke his fetters, and gave him freedom to walk the golden streets of the New Jerusalem.

Among many other places that were favored this year with revivals we may mention Fluvanna county, one of the early fields of Methodism.

The Rev. Allen R. Bernard has furnished us with a number of interesting and valuable reminiscences of the meetings which were held in that section of the State.

"In 1806 a gracious revival of religion occurred in Fluvanna county. A few years previous to this, John B. Magruder and George Jones, both local preachers, had removed from Maryland and settled in the county. In the early part of the summer of this year a Camp Meeting was held near the North Gar-

den, in Albemarle; several persons attended this meeting from Fluvanna and were converted.

They brought the revival fire with them from the Camp Meeting and at a single meeting held in the neighborhood of what is now Cunningham Church, the work was much extended; many were converted and gathered into the Church. Stith Mead was the Presiding Elder, and fully engaged in the work, assisted by a goodly company of zealous preachers, travelling and local; among the former was Thomas Anderson, a very popular preacher; among the latter were John B. Magruder, George Jones, and Nathan Anderson, of Louisa. The revival extended from this meeting; Cunningham Meeting House was built; regular preaching was established at the Union, the manufacturing mill then in course of erection, during the Summer; in the Winter the congregation met at the residence of Brother Magruder, and many blessed meetings were held in that old mansion.

In this revival precious fruits were gathered in many families, the Jones, Haydens, Flannagans, Magruders, Wrenns, Rileys, Roes, my father's and others. Mr. Magruder was a zealous preacher, and although engaged in extensive improvements was faithful in the work of the Lord. A few years after this, he died much regretted by a large circle of friends. His death was the means that God saw fit to sanctify to my awakening. I felt in view of his corpse, as I had never felt before, the deep importance of religion. Rev. George Jones was a zealous, holy man, preaching by precept and example. Rev. Nathan Anderson

was a man so devoted to the cause of God as to render his memory blessed. He had two sons who became travelling preachers."

Had full records been preserved of all the glorious works wrought by the Spirit of God this year in Virginia, and indeed, throughout the whole field of Methodism, we might linger amid scenes that would thrill every Christian heart; but the record of the men who toiled to cultivate Immanuel's lands is not on earth; it is in heaven.

"This was a prosperous year among the Methodists," says Jesse Lee, in his quiet way, "and the work of God was carried on in many places in an uncommon manner, both in the conversion and sanctification of souls. Indeed, the work was so great that it appeared to be almost incredible among Christians themselves who had never seen anything to equal it before."

On the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia the Camp Meetings surpassed anything of the kind that had ever been witnessed. At one of these meetings which continued five days and nights, one thousand souls were converted, at another a still greater number were gathered in.

"The account," says Jesse Lee, "was not merely a report, but was given by ministers and people, who were eye and ear witnesses, and who had taken great pains to ascertain the exact number of those who had openly professed to be delivered from the burden of their sins." "There never was a time," he adds, "among the Methodists in any part of the United

States, where so many professed to be converted in a few days, as there were at these meetings."

The Quarterly Meetings in that section of the work were almost equal to Camp Meetings. "It became quite common to begin them on Friday, and continue them until Sunday night or Monday forenoon; and for some hundreds of people to attend them in their wagons and carts, and with their tents; and to lodge in the woods by the meeting houses while the meeting lasted. It appeared for a long time as if nothing could stand before the work of the Lord; the faithful, fervent prayers of the saints seemed to bear down all before them. Ministers and people being happily united together, they strengthened each other's hands in the Lord, and each felt willing to bear the other's burden, and so fulfil the law of Christ. The people were oft times awakened and brought to the knowledge of God in the course of the same day; and some have been converted within a few hours from the time of their first awakening. Some who came to the meeting in the morning quite careless and wicked, have gone away before night happy in God. Some would fall beneath the power of God as if they were struck dead, and then lie speechless and helpless for a short space, while their friends would pray for them; and at last they would spring up of a sudden, and with a loud voice give praise to God for the pardon of their sins."

The Virginia Conference of 1870 met at New Berne, North Carolina, on the 2d of February. Seventeen were admitted on trial; fourteen were received into full connection, and ordained deacons;

four were elected and ordained elders; six located; nine had died.

The membership was reported at 17,735 whites and 5,668 colored; the increase was 3,158; this shows how general had been the revival throughout the Conference.

The deficiencies of the preachers amounted to $1,-182.38; collected from all sources to meet these claims $1,020.28; of this sum, $300 were received from the Book Concern, $140.28 from the circuits, and the balance was made up of legacies and donations. Of the amount collected, $200 were ordered to be paid into the Chartered Fund, leaving $820.28 to be divided among the claimants.

The number of appointments had been increased by dividing some of the larger circuits to thirty-eight; the number of preachers stationed was sixty-seven.

Of this session, Asbury writes: "We have used great diligence in our Conference labors, and have been faithful to the pulpit. Much might be said. I will only observe that we have sixty-seven preachers and have added three thousand one hundred and fifty-nine to this Conference bounds; we have since, on sitting here, known that there are twenty whites converted, and as many blacks. These blessings on our labors pay all our expenses, reward all toils in the midst of suffering and excessively cold weather."

The following entry on the records of this Conference has reference to an anomalous measure proposed by the New York Conference for the purpose of strengthening the Episcopacy.

"The New York Conference having written a circular letter to the several Annual Conferences, proposing a plan to strengthen the Superintendency, the letter was read in this Conference, and a vote was taken yesterday, 'shall we concur in the subject?' Only seven were in favor of the motion. The subject was called up again to-day, and a second vote was taken; fourteen were in favor of it. It is therefore the decision of this Conference not to be concerned in it."

The purport of this measure is thus given by Bangs, in his History of the Methodist Episcopal Church:

"This year [1806] a paper was submitted to the Annual Conferences, beginning with the Baltimore Conference, by Bishop Asbury, in favor of calling a General Conference of seven delegates from each Annual Conference, to meet in the city of Baltimore, in May, 1807, for the purpose of strengthening the Episcopacy.

"This paper was referred to a committee to consider and report thereon, and all the Conferences except Virginia reported in favor of the proposition, and elected their delegates accordingly. The report set forth that, in consequence of the declining health of Bishop Whatcoat, who was then supposed to be near his end, the great extension of our work over the Continent, and the debilitated state of Bishop Asbury's health, it had become necessary to strengthen the Episcopacy, and likewise to provide for a more permanent mode of Church government. The report, therefore, recommended that each of the seven Annual Conferences should elect seven delegates to

meet in the city of Baltimore the succeeding May, and that when so met, they should have power to elect one bishop or more, and also to provide for a future delegated General Conference, whose powers should be defined and limited by constitutional restrictions; for hitherto the General Conference possessed unlimited powers over our entire economy, could alter, abolish, or add to any article of religion or any rule of discipline. As this depository of power was considered too great for the safety of the Church and the security of its government and doctrine; and as the assembling of all the elders, few or many, at the option of each Annual Conference made the representation very unequal; and moreover, if all came who had a right to a seat, involved a great amount of expense, time and money, Bishop Asbury was exceedingly desirous before he should depart hence to provide a remedy for these evils; and this desire was strengthened and excited to action at this time by the concurrent views and wishes of most of the oldest preachers in the Conferences."

This plan was not to take effect unless adopted by all the Annual Conferences. When presented to the Virginia Conferences it was vigorously opposed by Jesse Lee, and, as we have seen, received only fourteen votes. His view of the scheme is briefly given by himself:

"In the course of the year 1806, there was a a plan laid which would have overset and destroyed the rules and regulations of the Methodists, respecting the election and ordination of Bishops. This plan was adopted by four of the Conferences, viz:

New York, New England, the Western and South Carolina Conferences, and delegates were accordingly chosen. But when it was proposed to the Virginia Conference they refused to take it under consideration, and rejected it as being pointedly in opposition to all the rules of our Church. The Bishop labored hard to carry the point, but he labored in vain; and the whole business of that dangerous plan was overset by the Virginia Conference. The inventors and defenders of that project might have meant well, but they certainly erred in judgment."

Asbury makes no allusion to the defeat of this cherished scheme in his Journal. He simply says:

"Much might be said;" and passes on to do his great work as earnestly and as faithfully as if the Conference had fully concurred in all his measures. His delicacy and good sense were distinguishing features in his well balanced character. But he must have felt the failure of his plans the more keenly, inasmuch as the recent death of Whatcoat had thrown upon him the whole burden of the Conference work. A feeble, and almost worn out old man, he yet stood up bravely under the load to which every year added greater weight.

After "a long ride of forty-two miles," he writes, "we got a little fodder for our horses, and took a cut of dry bread on the cold round ourselves. My mind enjoys great peace; and yet there are subjects that might disturb it, but I pass them over; I am not fond of hurting the feelings of people." Noble, generous old man! The Wesley of America!

A brief notice of Asbury's eminent co-laborer in

the Episcopacy will not be out of place in our narrative.

Richard Whatcoat, the third Bishop of the American Methodist Church, was born in Gloucestershire, England, in the year 1736. He was converted in his twenty-second year, and joined the Methodist Society at Wednesbury, famous for its furious mobs in the early days of English Methodism. In this Society which was "as ancient, well tried, greatly persecuted, and as respectable, according to the number of members, as any in the United Kingdoms," he remained a useful member for nine years. His gravity, sincerity, and simplicity, brought upon him the favorable notice of the leading members, and he was called to fill successively the offices of leader, steward, and local preacher.

In 1769 he gave himself fully to the work of God, and was received into the British Conference as a travelling preacher. Fifteen years he labored with zeal and success in various parts of England, Ireland and Wales.

At the Wesleyan Conference of 1784 he and Thomas Vasey responded to the call of their leader, and volunteered for the work in America. They were accepted by Wesley and ordained as Presbyters to assist Dr. Coke in the organization of the American Church. They were present at the Christmas Conference, and assisted in the ordination of Asbury as a General Superintendent. From this time Whatcoat fully identified himself with all the interests of American Methodism.

The next sixteen years he spent chiefly as Presiding

Elder, governing the Churches, directing the labors of the preachers, and everywhere exerting the happiest influence, by the gentleness, simplicity and fervor of his Christian life. For three years previous to his elevation to the Episcopacy, the Churches in Virginia were blessed with his faithful labors on a district which embraced almost the entire scope of country between the James and Roanoke Rivers, and from the Blue Ridge to the Seaboard.

"On this district," he says, "we passed through and touched on thirty counties in Virginia and North Carolina; it took me about six, or between that and seven hundred miles, to go through my district once in three months. We had a great revival in several parts of this district. I filled up my time with a good degree of peace and consolation."

At the General Conference of 1800 he was elected Bishop. In his new relation he showed the same ardor and self-denial for the cause of Christ that had marked his course for thirty years. His first episcopal tour was in company with his venerable co-laborer, "through Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and Tennessee, to Bethel, in Kentucky, partly a south and south-west course of one thousand three hundred and twenty miles."

Severe were the toils of these heroic old men in visiting and encouraging the infant Churches in the wilds of the West.

"The way we travelled," says Whatcoat, "from Nashville to Knoxville was about two hundred and twenty miles, partly a south-east course; but it was

trying to our delicate constitutions to ride through the rain a great part of the day, until late in the night, and then encamp on the wet ground, the wind and rain beating hard upon us."

Of their journey from Knoxville to Augusta, he writes: "We took nearly a south course of above three hundred miles? but oh! what mountains and rocks we had to pass over! When we came within a few miles of the Hot Springs, Bishop Asbury got a friend to lead his horse; but the road being rough and narrow, the horse stumbled or started, and turned the sulky bottom upward, between the Paint Rock and French Broad River; but the horse lay quietly on his back until we released the harness; the carriage rested against a large sapling, which supported it from going down into the river."

On their return to Baltimore in May, 1801, the bishops estimated the extent of their circuit at "about four thousand one hundred and eighty-four miles;" in this vast and toilsome journey they "had the pleasure of seeing and hearing that pure and undefiled religion was spreading in a general way, and that in some places it was extraordinary." This rate of travel was the annual work of these godly men, besides all their preaching and Conference work. Writing of another year's labors, Whatcoat says: "In the last twelve months I have travelled about three thousand seven hundred and seven miles, and in the sixty-seventh year of my age, though I have had considerable afflictions which have greatly shaken this house of clay."

In doing the work of a bishop this excellent man

fully met the expectations of his brethren who had raised him to this high office. In meekness, modesty, humility, simplicity and purity, he was a bright example to the Church of Christ. His amiable and serene spirit remained unruffled in the midst of all commotions; his firmness, combined with a singular softness of manner, was equal to every emergency in the difficult task of governing churches and Conferences, while the steady flame of love that burned in his saintly soul shed its blessed light on preachers and people as he moved among them a leader of the hosts of Israel.

A characteristic anecdote is related of him and Asbury. The latter was complaining on a certain occasion of the great annoyance of so much company. Whatcoat listened with meekness and deference, and then mildly replied: "O, Bishop, how much worse we should feel if we were entirely neglected." Asbury instantly thanked him for the reproof, and for the manner in which it was administered.

In a funeral discourse, Asbury bore the following testimony to the character of his colleague and friend:

"He had known Richard Whatcoat from his own age, of fourteen to sixty-two years, most intimately, and had tried him most accurately in the soundness of his faith, in the doctrine of universal depravity, and the complete and general atonement; the insufficiency of either moral or ceremonial righteousness for justification, in opposition to faith alone in the merit and righteousness of Christ; the doctrine of

regeneration and sanctification; his holy manner of life, in duty, at all times, in all places, and before all people, as a Christian and as a minister; his long suffering—a man of great affliction of body and mind—having been exercised with severe diseases and great labors—but this did not abate his charity, his love of God and man, in all its effects, tempers, words and actions; bearing with resignation and patience great temptations, bodily labors, and inexpressible pain; in life and death placid and calm; as he lived so he died."

In the obituary published in the General Minutes, and doubtless written by Asbury, his character is thus drawn: "We will not use many words to describe this almost inimitable man; so deeply serious! Who ever saw him light or trifling? Who ever heard him speak evil of any person? nay, who ever heard him speak an idle word? Dead to envy, pride, and praise. Sober without sadness, cheerful without levity, careful without covetousness, and decent without pride. He died not possessed of property sufficient to have paid the expenses of his sickness and funeral, if a charge had been made; so dead was he to the world!

"Although he was not a man of deep erudition, yet probably he had as much learning as some of the apostles and primitive bishops, and doubtless sufficient for the work of the ministry; he was deeply read in the word of God. His knowledge of the Scriptures was so great, that one of his friends used to call him his concordance. He gave himself greatly to reading. Notwithstanding he was called to the office of an overseer at an

advanced period of life, he magnified his office by travelling annually three or four thousand miles through all the United States.

"He hath proved himself worthy of the affection and confidence of the Methodist Connection in Europe and America. But we cannot in a few lines speak his Christian and ministerial excellencies. Indeed, they cannot be fully enumerated, for the man of deep piety frequently will not let his left hand know what his right hand doeth. He professed the justifying and sanctifying grace of God, and all that knew him well might say, if any man on earth possessed these blessings, surely it was Richard Whatcoat."

As a preacher he is said to have been attractive, interesting, instructive and deeply impressive. His sermons were "generally attended with a remarkable unction from the Holy One. Hence those who sat under his word if they were believers in Christ, felt that it was good to be there, for his doctrines distilled as the dew upon the tender herb, and as the rain upon the mown grass. The softness of his persuasions won upon the affections of the heart, while the rich flow of gospel truth which came from his lips enlightened the understanding."

As the character of this modest and saintly man has been somewhat slighted in the biographical literature of American Methodism, the reader will pardon the introduction of a more complete portrait, drawn by one who knew him long and loved him well.

"Bishop Whatcoat's personal appearance was interesting; so much so as to invite and please the good

and wise. The form of his body was genteel and grave; his soul comprehensive, vigorous, noble, great and active; his presence and aspect smooth and pleasant, yet solemn—often striking reverence and awe into the minds and deportment of such as looked upon him, especially when exercising the offices of his function.

"I may say of him as was said of Basil, 'that so much divine majesty and lustre appeared in him, it made the wicked tremble to behold,' and in like manner this most exact and holy man's solemn deportment was such as to command respect. In him were seen majesty and love—well expressed by the following lines:

> "Shall I not again on earth behold
> That countenance, so grave, so bold,
> Which, with a look could daunt the face of sin,
> And make offense to hide itself within?
> Most perfect image of the God above!
> Without was majesty, within was love;
> One drawn with sweetness by an infant's hand,
> Not driven by violence, or base command."

His whole deportment was so beautiful and so richly adorned with personal graces, that of him may be said, as of one of the old Puritans, 'He was made of love.'

"His amiable, heavenly and courteous carriage was such as to make him the delight of his acquaintances, and to prepare them for the reception of his counsels and reproofs.

"His compassion for man in a lost condition—his acts of charity to those in want—his tenderness for such as were culpable—his affectionate language and

bearing in the exercise of his ministry—and his love were set forth in his ardent longings after the souls of his hearers. His rejoicings in their spiritual prosperity—his bleedings and heart-breakings for their backslidings—his labors among them both public, and from house to house, his frequent and affectionate letters to them when absent—his earnest desire to spend and be spent for them, always evinced what share they had in his affections.

He was a man of fortitude; he appeared to fear no danger where duty was plain, (as his labors and troubles showed) believing that he who walks uprightly walks safely, though he 'pass through the valley and shadow of death.' He feared not the face of man; but where there was just occasion, he would boldly admonish and faithfully reprove what he saw amiss; but with so much prudence, and with such words of love and tenderness as made their way to the heart, and gave him great success in winning souls to his heavenly Master.

Bishop Whatcoat was a man of peace and a great peace-maker among his brethren where dissensions arose from want of sober and peaceable principles. He had a reverent esteem for the laws of the country, abhorring all insolent expressions or mutinous actions, keeping by him a copy of the laws of the State where his labors were directed, so that he might not violate them in any of his sacred functions, whereby the gospel might be blamed. He also kept a manuscript of the municipal laws, so that he might know how to act in every place, and keep himself unspotted from the world.

"He was a great lover of truth and righteousness in his own practice, and a great presser of them on his hearers, especially upon religious professors, exhorting them to be just in all their doings, and true in their words; to be cautious in promising, and punctual in performing; sharply reproving promise breakers and deceitful dealers.

"He was anxious for the conversion of sinners and for the success of the gospel. To promote this end he poured out his soul in prayer and preaching. He imparted not only the word, but himself as it were, to his hearers. His supplications and exhortations were so affectionate, so full of holy zeal and power, as to greatly move his auditors, and melt them into tears and penitential sorrow; but not by vain repetitions, crude expressions, unintelligible sense, or mysterious nonsense in place of prayer. His spirit was serious, his gestures reverent, his words well suited, well weighed, pithy, solid, and truly expressive of his truly humble and fervent desire after the things he asked. He was nigh to God, as became a creature overawed by the majesty of his Creator. He prayed with the spirit and the understanding, with faith, fervency, and humble importunity—his affections working, but rationally as well as strongly, by which he prevailed with his Redeemer and on his hearers. He set God always before him, and whereever he was, he labored to walk as in his presence. His main desire in all things was to study to 'show himself approved of God the Father, who seeth in secret and rewardeth openly;' and to keep a conscience void of offense both to God and man.

Much of his time he spent in private devotion and converse with Christ and his own soul, delighting in secret prayer and retirement, that he might freely use his voice to his heavenly Father."

"His deportment was such, as if every moment he saw Christ, and had God's law, his own conscience, and covenant with the Holy Spirit, and the day of judgment before his eyes.

"When he awoke in the night, he was in meditation or prayer, exulting and praising God like Paul and Silas, speaking to himself in spiritual songs, making melody in the heart with grace.

"This holy man was sent to the Church as if for a sample, to show what a life of peace and holiness Christians may attain on earth, where sincerity, privation, diligence, watchfulness, love of divine communion, and humble and active faith do meet and center."

"My first journey with him," says the same writer, "was over the Alleghany Mountains to the frontiers of Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia. I found him so fixed in the ways of God that nothing could disengage him or move his patience, so as to make him murmur in the least degree. He was never wearied with fatigue of riding or of preaching, so as to make him abate his private devotions; but after lecturing and praying several times a day in public, on retiring he poured out his soul before he laid his body to rest, by which means he was ever ready to sound forth the high praises of his gracious Redeemer at all times and on all occasions. His tours through the backwoods were very dangerous; the Indians were

not then at peace with the United States, but remained hostile and made frequent incursions and destroyed many families, as well as single persons, wherever they met them; so that some whom he preached to and baptized in those parts, were killed and scalped a few weeks after. I think not less than seventy were miserably mangled and killed within a year and a half, in and about their own houses.

'Whatcoat appeared to be the same at all times and under all circumstances; to be as calm in the wilds as in the cultivated fields—in the smoky cabin as in the carpeted parlor—amidst the clamors of untoward children, where he was detained during the mountain storm, or flood of rain that had raised the rivers so that they could not be forded.

"His voluntary labors and travels in America proved his strong attachment to the Redeemer's cause and an itinerant life. He refused honor, worldly gain, and worldly pleasure which were strewed at his feet. He refused all and preferred feeding the lambs of Jesus Christ, and calling sinners to repentance to all the glories of the world. Wearing himself out to give light and heat unto others, he allowed himself little rest; he rose at five in the morning wherever he was, even in winter, that having communed first with his Sovereign he might be early at his studies, and well prepared to declare the accepted time of the Lord and the day of salvation. His moderation was known to all who knew him. In all things he showed himself a pattern—in piety, in doctrine, and in zeal he was a living witness of all he taught to others.

"He departed this life at Governor Bassett's house,

at Dover, State of Delaware, among the wise and great. In his death he showed how a Christian could die. Many saw him in his severe affliction and extreme pain, which he bore for thirteen weeks without murmuring or complaining. They saw that he was privileged far above the common walks of virtuous life, his mind being in heaven before it got its discharge from the body; his heavenly admonitions are still fresh in the minds of some who are in the world as witnesses of his victory over the fear of death on the 5th of June, 1806. As in his life and death he left us such a glorious privilege in his example, can any heart refuse its tribute of gratitude and praise to that God in whose service he spent his life."

The names of Edward Cannon and John Early are the most conspicuous of those who were received on trial at the Virginia Conference of 1807.

Cannon rose rapidly as a preacher. His high order of intellect, his ministerial ability, and his eminently pure moral character, made him a man of mark in the Church. He was a sound and deep theologian, firm in his principles and decided in his opinions. His great self-possession kept him calm amid all the changes of life around him. He was a member of the General Conferences, of 1816 and 1820, and at the last named session was the author of the resolution proposing the suspension of the rule making the Presiding Elders elective by the Annual Conferences, until the ensuing General Conference.

Worn down by twenty-six years of hard toil in the itinerant field, seven of which he spent on large and laborious districts, he departed to the rest of heaven.

In his last moments he bore testimony to the truths he had preached to others, saying with Benson: "We must now go back to first principles;" and "if I were not now a converted man, I could not become one." The memory of Edward Cannon is still cherished by many of the older Methodists in Virginia and North Carolina, who remember him as one of the most faithful, holy and useful men that ever lived and labored among them.

The name of John Early has been as familiar as a household word among American Methodists for the last fifty years. Since the death of Bishop Soule, perhaps no man among us is more fully acquainted with the history and achievements of Methodism during that period than this eminent minister.

He was born in Bedford county, Virginia, January 1st, 1786. His parents were members of the Baptist Church, in affluent circumstances, and occupying a high social position. He was converted under the ministry of Rev. Stith Mead, at Flat Rock Church, Bedford, now Campbell county, April 22nd, 1804. He soon united with the Methodists, and his youthful zeal found scope in the subordinate offices of the Church, which he filled with signal usefulness. One of the scenes of his early labors was the large estate of President Jefferson, many of whose slaves the young preacher instructed and led to Christ. In April, 1806, he was licensed to preach and was employed by the Presiding Elder on Bedford circuit. He preached his first sermon at Wilson's Church, and when he entered the pulpit, the tears he had shed on parting with his loved ones at home were frozen

on his overcoat. He spent the balance of the year in earnest labors on this circuit, and at its close gave himself to the full work of the itinerancy. From this work he has never turned aside. His labors were greatly blessed in the various fields of toil. In Greensville he received five hundred members into the Church. At a famous Camp Meeting held by him at Prospect, Prince Edward county, while Presiding Elder of the Meherrin District, it is said that in seven days about one thousand persons professed conversion. Under a sermon delivered by him at that meeting on the words, "And if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shall cut it down," to an audience of three thousand, not more than a hundred remained unmoved.

His administrative talents attracted the notice of Bishop Asbury, and he was called to the office of Presiding Elder, after he had travelled only seven years. He was offered various civil appointments by different Presidents, but declining them all, he labored as a man of one work. He felt that he was doing a great work and could not come down.

Possessing a physical frame of wonderful powers of endurance, he has been able to do the full work of an itinerant preacher for almost sixty years. With a mind bold, strong, clear and comprehensive, he has gathered a vast fund of knowledge in reference to all the practical operations of Methodism; he is indeed a living encyclopedia of all facts, precedents and examples which have occurred in the Church, since he first took his seat in an Annual Conference. In this respect he is invaluable as a guide, in the discus-

sion of many questions that must be determined by the lights and usages of other days. In every department to which the Church has called him, he has served with zeal, success, and undeviating devotion to all her interests. As a circuit preacher, Presiding Elder, Conference Missionary, College Agent, Book Agent and now in the high office of Bishop, he has shown himself to be a man ready for every good work. Activity, constant, untiring activity, is a law of his being. Nor does the weight of years seem to burden him as it does other men; he is still erect in form, elastic in his tread, entertaining in conversation, forcible in preaching, wise in counsel, fervent in spirit, watchful over the Church of God, and burning with a holy zeal in the sacred work to which he has given his cheerful toil from the days of his youth.

In the Virginia Conference there are three men who are the remaining links that connect us with the age of the fathers, John Early, Benjamin Devany and Joseph Carson. May their last days be as full of the peaceable fruits of righteousness, as their lives have been full of all good works in the service of Christ.

In reference to the general prosperity of the Churches in Virginia this year, we have no reliable information. We however, feel quite sure that the reader will be entertained by the following extracts from the personal narratives of Messrs. Devany and Carson.

"I was ordained Deacon," says the latter, "at the Baltimore Conference of 1807, by Bishop Asbury. The old Bishop said he intended, 'to warn Baltimore faithfully at this Conference.' He therefore engaged

every church in the city (except the Roman Catholic) and every Market House, to have preaching in on the Sabbath. In the morning I preached in Light Street Church, and in the afternoon in one of the Markets; here there was a great deal of interest manifested; the butcher's block on which I stood was surrounded with penitents, and several were converted. From this Conference I was sent to Staunton circuit; it was a two weeks' circuit with thirteen appointments and embraced all of Augusta, part of Rockingham, and part of Rockbridge counties. Here I had an opportunity of seeing something of that singular affection called the Jerks. I have known ladies to attend church without bonnets, or combs in their hair; and I have positively seen them jerk so violently that their hair would crack like a whip. I have seen persons jerked over ground which was rocky and full of stumps, and wonderful to tell, they were never hurt. They would always beg not to be held or touched while thus affected, saying that it caused great pain. I had heard that this strange affection could be produced simply by pronouncing the word jerk with emphasis, but I did not believe it; for I was incredulous with regard to the whole thing at first, and I determined to prove it. I was one evening with a young lady who was wild and frolicsome, and I thought she was a very good subject for my experiment. In the course of conversation I introduced the word, strongly emphasizing it; the influence seemed to be electric, for in one moment she was jerking powerfully. She ran to the door, but just as she would raise the latch, a jerk would throw her midway the floor; she was

finally jerked under the bed, when the rattling of some carpenter's tools warned us that that was an unsafe place for her, so in spite of her entreaties we had to take hold of her.

This was my first experiment with the jerks and it was perfectly satisfactory. I never met with this affection elsewhere, except in Greenbrier circuit, a year or two after this, and there it was worse, if possible, than in Staunton."

After remaining on this circuit a few months he was transferred to Harrisonburg. He continues: "In Harrisonburg we had a good church, but it was not then a station with only two or three appointments; it extended to within thirty miles of Winchester, embracing Shenandoah and the larger part of Rockingham.

Dr. Harrison, the father of the late Professor Gessner Harrison, then lived in the place, and was one of our most useful men; he had been a member of the Church for six years, but though scrupulously consistent, and by all regarded as a pattern of piety, he had never been satisfied of his conversion. There being no leader for the class, I determined to appoint him to that office, though assured by all his friends that he would not serve. Meeting him on the street one day, I said to him: 'Doctor, I have appointed you leader of the class in this place;' he looked amazed, but consented to take the commission. The first time he met the class he said to them: 'Brother Carson has made me your leader, and I will do the best I can for you; for though you know I do not

profess to be converted, I know the way, and can tell you how you ought to walk.'

He gave them a warm exhortation, and while thus employed, became very happy; and clapping his hands exclaimed, 'Blessed be God! I *know* I am converted now!' and I believe that he was no more troubled with doubts on this score."

This excellent man served the Church for many years, and was equally eminent as a physician and a Christian.

We have been favored with an interesting sketch of a field of labor which the preachers of the Virginia Conference have always regarded as a "hard circuit." "At the Conference of 1807," says Rev. B. Devany, "my appointment was read out for Mattamuskeet and Banks, with John Gibbons and John Humphries as my colleagues. The Conference over, I went to the town of Washington, North Carolina, and as there was no communication by land to my isolated field of labor, I disposed of my horse, and obtained a passage in a small decked craft which was used for inland navigation On this I embarked with scarcely a hope that I should ever return again. The cabin was so small and uncomfortable that the trip was anything but pleasant, especially to one who was on his first sea voyage. We landed at Mattamuskeet, on Sunday morning in time to reach the Church before the hour for service. My feelings now could be much more easily imagined than described. The flat, rich, alluvial soil, and the sickly appearance of the inhabitants, but confirmed me in my fears that I should never again see my native hills! But fortunately

for us, by a law of our nature, we may accommodate ourselves to the circumstances that surround us. I was kindly received by the people, soon became reconciled to my lot, and spent a pleasant year among them.

"On this isolated spot lived a local preacher, Frederick Roper. He married and settled here after travelling a few years. He was a good preacher, a consistent Christian, and exercised a commanding influence as a minister. There was but one church on this place, but we preached at several other places in private houses. Environed by the Pamlico Sound and the Dismal Swamp, and well nigh shut out from the rest of the world, the people here were very deficient in literary and moral culture.

"From Mattamuskeet we crossed the Sound, which is twenty-five or thirty miles wide, to the chain of banks lying between the Sound and the Ocean. Portsmouth Island lies south of Ocracoke Inlet, and was the most pleasant place in this whole chain of banks. The society was more refined and intelligent in consequence of the occasional visits of some of the families to the town of New Berne, and their daily intercourse with the shipping which anchored off near the place. The settlement on the north side of the inlet derives its name from the inlet, and is, settled principally by pilots. The men were generally intemperate and indolent, lying about the beacon or lookout, basking in the sun like so many alligators, while their wives and daughters were at home grinding corn or picking up wood for culinary purposes. From this place we proceeded north through the set-

tlements, preaching the gospel to the people in private houses, to Chickamacomac, the last settlement on this chain of banks. From this point we crossed over to Roanoke Island. The church here, and the one in Mattamuskeet, were the only two embraced in this large and romantic field of labor. The manners and customs of the bankers were pretty much the same. Shut out as they were from all the world, and deprived of the advantages of education and intercourse with refined society, they were to a great extent brought up in ignorance and licentiousness. We held a Camp Meeting on the banks at a place called Kinnekute; it was the first ever held in that region, and we had a profitable time.

"The musketoes were a very great annoyance to man and beast, both by day and by night. When the weather was pleasant, I was in the habit of taking my umbrella and books and repairing to the sea-shore that I might read and study in some peace. At night I often slept in the same room with the family, with an iron pot in the middle of the room, in which a smoke was kept up during the night as a protection against these pestiferous insects. The year being closed, I had then, as the preachers used to say, graduated on the Banks."

In this uncongenial soil and among these rude people, Methodism was planted by the untiring zeal of such godly men as the venerable author of the above extract. He was permitted to look upon the rich harvests which had sprung from the seed scattered by him and his co-laborers. More than twenty years after the close of his collegiate course on the

Banks, he returned to the same field as presiding elder. Of his later visits he says: "When I went among them I was quite astonished and much delighted to see the intellectual, moral, and physical improvement which had been made in the course of twenty odd years.

"The land, which is the richest I ever saw, was well drained and cultivated; and along the road, which runs upon the margin of the lake, could be seen large fields of this rich, alluvial soil, waving in the most luxuriant growth of Indian corn."

The Conference for 1808 met at Lynchburg on the 2nd of February. The journey of Asbury through the Piedmont region of North Carolina, in order to meet the Conference in time, was one of much toil and exposure. He had mingled feelings of sadness and joy as he rode rapidly on, preaching wherever he could assemble the people. In the house of an old Methodist where he lodged, his spirit was greatly grieved with the ungodly children, especially one who had fallen from grace. At his next resting-place he almost rejoiced that there were no children to turn away from the God of their fathers. "I endure considerable pain," he writes: "my beast starts and stumbles. The perpetual changes of weather, and the company sometimes forced upon one on the road, is disagreeable; but it is much worse in the cabins crowded with men, women and children—no place to retire for reading, writing or meditation; the woods are too cool for solitude at this season." And yet in the midst of all these disagreeable scenes, he spent every moment of quiet he could secure in "reading,

writing, praying and planning." Reaching Bedford county, he "visited brothers Leftwich and Wheat, and then made a toilsome march over Little and Big Otter, about thirty miles to Price's." Resting here but one day, be pushed on and reached Lynchburg on Saturday. On Sunday he preached to about six hundred hearers, and felt paid for all his toil. The Conference was opened on Tuesday and continued in session until Saturday. "We progressed with great speed," says Asbury, "and in good order, preaching each day." Eighteen were received on trial; nine were ordained elders; eleven ordained deacons in the travelling connection, and nine in the local ranks, five located, none had died.

The preachers were deficient in their salaries $978.-12; the whole amount to meet this from all sources was $592.43. In view of the small sums received from the circuits for this fund, the Conference passed an order "that no assistant preacher, who does not make a collection in his circuit, and bring it to the Annual Conference shall have any demand on the Conference for his deficiency."

The numbers were reported at 18,169 whites, and 5,834 colored; the increase was 600.

The Conference spent the afternoon of the last day of its session "in serious and useful conversation on dress, private prayer, family prayer, rising early, quarterly meetings, camp meetings, class meetings, fasting, love feasts, sacraments, quarterly meeting Conference, their record books, the marriage rule," &c.

In the Minutes of this year it is for the first time

recorded that "the appointments of the preachers were read out, and then Conference adjourned until Conference in course."

It has been seen that the attempt to call a General Conference had been defeated by the Virginia Conference. At this session a memorial was presented from the New York Conference, urging the necessity of constituting the General Conference a representative legislative council. To such a measure the Virginia Conference could have no objection, and the memorial was agreed to with scarcely a dissenting voice.

Dr. L. M. Lee, in the "Life and Times of Jesse Lee," narrates one or two characteristic anecdotes of his venerable kinsman, in connection with this Conference.

Lynchburg in those days was a town of unpaved streets, and they were sometimes nearly impassible.

"In returning from the Conference room one day, Jesse Lee, having some business on the opposite side of the street along which he was passing, was sadly puzzled to find a crossing place. After a fruitless search he paused, and was gravely debating with himself whether he should ford the street, 'knee deep in mud,' or abandon the object of his pursuit. In this mood of mind, John Charleson, a stout athletic negro, a preacher, and a great admirer of Mr. Lee, came up and took part in the consultation. Ascertaining the difficulty in the case, he proposed to overcome it by taking Mr. Lee across on his back. The proffer was instantly agreed to, and he mounted the back of his generous friend. Two hundred and fifty-

nine pounds of living flesh is no small burden for one man to bear, but John bore it till he reached the middle of the street, where he paused to overcome the attraction of gravitation, by shaking his burden higher up on his shoulders. Perspiration stood in large beads upon his face, and he groaned audibly. But he staggered on, paused, and drily asked his rider if he might not set him down and rest a spell. Gathering up his strength for another effort, he pressed on, but turning up the corner of his eye until it reached the face of Mr. Lee, he groaned out, 'Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!' Quick as thought the response came, 'You do groan, being burdened.' And he was burdened. But dry land was reached, and with mutual pleasure they pursued their walk side by side."*

*John Charleson was at that time the slave of Rev. Stith Mead with whom he often travelled in the capacity of servant and preacher. We find the following account of this really good and useful man in Mead's journal:

"At a Quarterly Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the city of Richmond, called by the Rev. Stith Mead, presiding elder of the Richmond District, Virginia Conference, for the purpose of ascertaining the number of years Brother John Charleson, a man of color, should serve Stith Mead, for the sum of one hundred and ten pounds, which he, the said Mead has given, as appears to us from a bill of sale now before us, executed by the Rev. Josep h Cross to the said Mead. That the said John Charleson is to serve Stith Mead seven years in consideration of the above sum of one hundred and ten pounds from the date hereof. Signed by the Conference this eight day of March, one thousand eight hundred and six.

To be entered upon the journals of the Church book.

Enoch Sullivan,
A. Foster,
David McMasters,
John Ellis,
Philip Courtney,
James Coulling.

Dr. Lee is also responsible for the following:

"The Virginia Conference, it is well known, was for many years a band of inveterate and invincible old bachelors. When a member married he seemed to think that unless he could justify the act, he must lose caste among his brethren. A case of the kind came up at this Conference; the brother admitted the impeachment and gave his reasons very seriously for choosing no longer "to be alone." He had made it a subject of serious reflection, he had consulted judicious brethren, and lastly he had made it a matter of earnest prayer, and had reached the conclusion that, in view of all the circumstances, he ought to marry; and therefore he had married. There being no law prohibiting marriage, his statements were gratuitous. "But it provoked the pleasantry of Mr. Lee, and slowly rising from his seat, he said he was afraid the brother had fallen into a mistake; he had been in that way himself and would like to tell his experience: 'I once thought I ought to marry, and I thought a great deal about it too. And I thought I must pray about it; but somehow or other I always found myself praying, 'O Lord, let thy will be done, but do let me have the woman!' I wanted the woman and my prayers always ended there. Perhaps the brother

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In a note appended to this, dated 1832, Mead adds:

"John Charleson is recorded free in the clerk's office of Campbell county, Virginia, as he was a preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church, of good talents and piety. I opened a subscription to raise the amount of his purchase money, and procured his liberty in about half the term of years he was to serve. He is yet alive, about 67 years of age, and above 40 years a preacher of the gospel in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and has many seals to his ministry both white and colored."

wanted the woman, and she and the Lord were willing, but they both opposed me!' The cheerful laugh that followed this relation of personal experience may have derived much of its zest from a consciousness of its general applicability to such cases."

No sooner had the Conference closed than Asbury was again in the saddle and on the road. His route lay through the Piedmont counties toward the Potomac.

"We rode," he says, "twenty-four miles through mire and heavy a cold rain, crossing the Rapidan to John Stockdale's. Our host made us comfortable after our toil. By deep wading and plunging through mud, we reached Lott Fry's. I ordained him a Deacon. I could not willingly rest here on the Sabbath, so I came away to John Kobler's, and arrived just as sermon had ended. I ordained D. M'Masters a Deacon. Monday brought us to Bashaw's. Next day we got into Father Hitt's. O, the rocks, rivers, mud, frost, hills, cold and hunger! Possibly, we have ridden seven hundred miles from Charleston, in twenty-two days."

For several days he rested "under the roof of Herman Hitt." He was a venerable patriarch of eighty-six years; he had lived to see four generations, and was the head of eighteen families; he had given three sons and one grandson to the Methodist ministry. Beneath the roof of such a man Asbury delighted to rest for a little space, but even then he was not idle; he was "reading, writing," and planning for the greater spread of the work throughout the vast field that he overlooked. He preached "at the new house

in Rectortown: the wind blew and it was cold but they had an open season." He preached to "a full house at Mounts;" visited the widow Roszell and her afflicted children, and called on brother Donaw—weak but faithful. He was rejoiced to hear that there was a blessed work of grace in the east end of Loudon county.

He preached at Leesburg, and then passed on to meet the Baltimore Conference, at Georgetown, D. C.

In the absence of any extended accounts of revivals during this year, the records being very barren in this respect, the reader may be interested in the following from Rev. J. Carson's recollections, showing the trials and persecutions with which the early preachers had to contend.

His field of labor was Botetourt Circuit, embracing a very extensive scope of country in the roughest portion of the State.

"Within the bounds of this circuit lived four local preachers, Brothers Burgess, Samuel, and Ed ward Mitchell, and Dr. French, who afterwards figured quite prominently as a Radical. They were kind, good men, and in their houses I felt at home. At Blacksburg, a little village on the top of the Alleghany we had some bitter foes. The brethren there had bought a dwelling-house and fitted it up for a church, and at this place I was once arrested for the purpose of being put in jail. These were the circumstances:

"I preached there one Sabbath night, the text I do not remember but the position assumed was, that

we are all candidates either for the kingdom of heaven or hell. While on this point a young man arose, put on his hat and took a stand just in front of me. I presently requested him to take his seat, whereupon he uttered some insulting and blasphemous language, and walked out of the house.

"As he turned, I observed that I feared that young man was a candidate for the region of darkness. About the close of the sermon he returned, and seeing nothing favorable in his countenance, I concluded to remain and attend to some business which I had with the brethren; he remained also, and after dispatching my business I started out, but placing himself in the door he refused to let me pass, saying, 'You insulted me, sir, and I'll have satisfaction.' 'Who are you?' I asked, 'are you the young man who misbehaved during the services?' He denied the charge and gave me a blow which had well nigh sent me backward, but I recovered, and finding that I must defend myself, I seized him by the arm and led him out of my way. Just then an old Dutchman came up and collaring him, gave him a pretty rough shaking, saying, 'You, Shon Myers, you 'haves yourself or I makes you.' I then walked off with brother Burgess, and left them to settle it between them.

"I left the village next morning without seeing any thing more of 'Shon Myers,' though I heard of some of his bold threats about horse-whipping me, &c. However, before I went there again, fearing to undertake that, I suppose, he changed his tactics, and concluded to have me arrested.

"It so happened that there lived in the village a

magistrate whose enmity I had incurred in the following way. The first time I was ever in the place, I chanced to hear this man repeating a petty slander on Bishop McKendree, to this effect, the Bishop and another preacher were passing through that part of the country not long before, and coming to a spring they alighted, took out a bottle, and drank very copiously; a negro boy happening to pass at the time, they gave him a dram and the bottle not to tell on them, but he had disclosed the whole affair. I listened to him silently, and when he had finished, I said, 'Mr. B., I would never repeat that again, for really it sounds so much like a lie that it does not claim credit. I doubt not, sir, you heard it all, but I would not tell it again. Don't you suppose, if it were true, that these men were too wise to give the negro the only tangible proof of their guilt?' But notwithstanding my assurance that I did not intend to doubt *his word*, I saw that he was offended. To this magistrate Myers made his complaint, and he most cheerfully promised that he should be avenged. When next I went to Blacksburg the arrest was presented, and on examining it, I found the indictment was for a '*Breach of the Sabbath.*'

"At the appointed hour I went to his office, and there found the magistrate, the prosecutor, his witnesses, and a crowd of my own friends, besides those who went with me.

"They proceeded to the trial; Myers swore that I collared him and called him, 'a —— black candidate for Hell.' The magistrate then broke out in a long tirade against Methodist preachers; they thought

they could do as they pleased, &c. I listened to it all without interruption, and after he got through, I demanded that my witnesses be called; he refused. I then asked him to give me the 'Revised Code,' and told him I had never studied law, but I had been fortunate enough to read a little. Turning to the 'Breach of the Sabbath,' and reading what was said on that subject, I asked him if any of his testimony proved that I had been engaged in any unlawful pursuit on the Sabbath night in question. I again asked that my witnesses be sworn; he again refused, saying, 'You are dismissed.' 'I am then no longer your prisoner?' 'No.' 'I am a free man.' 'Yes.' 'Well then, sir, I will tell you in the presence of this assembly what I think of you. I am not here to answer for Methodist preachers, but for myself. Hoping to have an opportunity to revenge yourself on me for an offence innocently offered by trying to defend an absent brother, you issued this warrant of arrest, but you did not know under what statute to put it. I now demand a copy of this man's oath, he has sworn falsely as I can prove. This he also refused, but I told him it mattered not, for I knew where to find the grand jury, and I had the requisite number of witnesses to prove it a perjury. This scared poor Myers so badly that he soon left for 'parts unknown.' I had no more trouble the remainder of the year."

The Fifth General Conference assembled at Baltimore on the 6th of May. It was composed of one hundred and twenty-nine members, of whom eighteen were from the Virginia Conference. Our limits

will allow only a rapid glance at the important proceedings of this body.

The plan which had been proposed for a delegated General Conference was consummated, and henceforward the Church possessed a proper legislative council, limited in the exercise of its powers by wise constitutional restrictions. The "Restrictive Rules," as they are called, were drawn up by the Rev. Joshua Soule, a junior member of the Conference, every year of whose subsequent career has added new proofs of his great sagacity and wisdom as a ruler in the Church of Christ.

Some alterations were made in the rules for the ordination of local preachers. Before this time they were ordained upon the recommendation of nine travelling preachers. By the action of this Conference they could only reach orders by the recommendation of the Quarterly Conference and the approval of the Annual Conference, after a careful examination of their characters.

Each Annual Conference was allowed "full liberty to adopt and recommend" such measures as they might deem best for raising the necessary supplies for the preachers.

Considerable dissatisfaction was evinced at this session towards Dr. Coke, who was absent in England. The dissatisfaction of the preachers seems to have arisen from two sources. At the earnest solicitation of the English Conference, the preceeding General Conference had consented to the return of Coke to England, with permission to remain there

until this General Conference, unless recalled by three of the yearly Conferences.

During his stay in England he married, and afterward wrote to his American brethren, proposing to settle permanently among them on condition that the Continent should be equally divided between him and Asbury as the Superintending Bishops. This proposal was distasteful to the preachers, and they declined to accede to it.

But a far more serious opposition to Dr. Coke was grounded upon his confidential letter to Bishop White of Pennsylvania, proposing a union between the Methodist Episcopal and the Protestant Episcopal Churches.

This famous letter, written at Richmond, Va., in April 1791, remained a secret until the summer of 1804.

The letter, made public in a discussion raised in the Diocese of Maryland, struck the friends of Dr. Coke with astonishment. An explanation was demanded; the Doctor responded with his characteristic fairness and candor in a letter to this General Conference.

He gives his reasons for proposing the union. The Church had at that time no regular General Conferences; he was greatly troubled and not a little alarmed at the hostile attitude of O'Kelly and his faction towards Asbury, and had, only a few months before he wrote this letter, prevailed on him and the thirty-six preachers who had withdrawn with him from all connection with Bishop Asbury, to submit to the decision of a General Conference. Previous to the holding of this Conference, (1792) there were only small district meet-

ings, except the Council which was held at Cokesbury—save the union which existed between Asbury on the one hand, and the preachers and people on the other, the Society, as such, taken as an aggregate was almost like a rope of sand. He longed to see matters on a footing likely to be permanent. Asbury felt the same and hence he tried the experiment of the Council; in this Coke differed with him; and believed that the Connection would be more likely to be saved from convulsions by a union with the old Episcopal Church, than in any other way—not by a dereliction of ordination, sacraments, and the Methodist discipline, but by a junction on proper terms.

Such are his reasons. He further says:

"Bishop White, in two interviews I had with him in Philadelphia, gave me reason to believe that this junction might be accomplished with ease. Dr. Magaw was perfectly sure of it. Indeed (if Mr. Ogden, of New Jersey did not mistake in the information he gave me) a canon passed the House of Bishops of the old Episcopal Church in favor of it. Bishop Madison, according to the same information, took the canon to the lower house. 'But it was there thrown out,' said Mr. Ogden, to whom I explained the whole business, 'because they did not understand the full meaning of it.'

"I had provided," he continues, "in the fullest manner, in my indispensably necessary conditions, for the security, and, I may say, for the independence of our discipline and places of worship. But I thought (perhaps erroneously and I believe so now) that our field of action, would have been exceedingly en-

larged by that junction, and that myriads would have attended our ministry in consequence of it, who were at that time much prejudiced against us. All these things unitedly considered, led me to write the letter, and meet Bishop White and Dr. Magaw on the subject in Philadelphia.

Bishop Emory in his "Defence of our Fathers," very properly says in reference to this affair, "that whatever Dr. Coke did in this matter, was his own individual act; and was neither approved of nor known by his colleague, Bishop Asbury, nor, as far as we are acquainted, by a single other Methodist minister in the United States.

"And Dr. Coke lived long enough to see, and with his characteristic candor, to acknowledge that the failure of his scheme had been for the best."

The Conference was satisfied with the explanation of Coke, and retained his name on the Minutes, with the proviso that he was "not to exercise the office of Superintendent in the United States, until recalled by the General Conference, or by all the Annual Conferences respectively."

The Conference determined to strengthen the Episcopacy by the election of an additional Bishop, and the choice fell upon William McKendree, than whom a worthier man never filled that high office. "The electing dear brother McKendree assistant bishop," was highly pleasing to the veteran Asbury. "The burden," he writes, "is now borne by two pair of shoulders instead of one; the care is cast upon two hearts and heads."

The Journal of this General Conference bears the

record of an action perfectly anomalous in the history of Church legislation. On the last day of the session it was

"Moved from the Chair, that there be one thousand Forms of Discipline prepared for the use of the South Carolina Conference, in which the section and rule on slavery be left out. Carried."

This motion was made either by Asbury or McKendree; the latter had never preached in the South; he had been employed for twenty years in Virginia and in the Western States. Asbury was perfectly familiar with public opinion in the South, and fully appreciated the hostile attitude of the people towards an anti-slavery Church. For more than twenty years he had been watching the growth of Methodism in South Carolina, and had doubtless reached the conclusion that its preservation in that State required this extraordinary act of legislation.

Of this act, by which both the section on slavery and the general rule, were expurgated from the Forms of Discipline, designed for circulation in a particular section of the Church, we leave the reader to form his own judgment. With Dr. Lee we may say: "One thing is apparent in this, and all the other anti-slavery proceedings of our fathers. They would never have suffered 'the great evil of slavery' to produce the still greater evil of rending the seamless garment of Christ in twain. They would have preserved the unity of the Church maugre all the evils of slavery—if the windings of legislation could have secured so great and beneficial an end."

In many respects this was the most important Gen-

eral Conference that had assembled since the Convention (for such it really was) in 1784. The wisest men of the Church were gathered in council. Virginia furnished eighteen, among whom the names of Philip Bruce, Jesse Lee, Daniel Hall, and John Buxton are the most conspicuous. From the deliberations of this Conference Methodism received such a form of government as secured to the ministry and laity their full rights, and at the same time threw such safeguards around her doctrines and economy as to shield them from the successful assaults of open enemies, and the more dangerous machinations of pretended friends.

CHAPTER XIV.

Conference of 1809—Bad effects of the anti-slavery doctrines—Address of the prisoners in the Penitentiary—Scene at the Harrisonburg Conference—A snake bite—First Camp Meeting in the Northern Neck—Conference of 1811—Asbury's labors—His visit to Richmond—A prayer Meeting—Plan of Asbury for a history of Methodism in America—Gracious revivals—Great Camp Meeting near Winchester—Conference of 1812—Asbury on the Road—Anecdote of Wesley—Camp meeting near Richmond—Stratagem of Jesse Lee—First delegated General Conference—New measures proposed—Conference of 1813—Lewis Skidmore—Conference of 1814—Feebleness of Asbury—His devotion to first work—Death of Dr. Thomas Coke—Conference of 1815—Decrease in numbers—Conference of 1816—Death of Asbury—His character and labors—Death of Jesse Lee.

THE Conference of 1809 met at Tarborough, North Carolina, on the 1st of February. Asbury and McKendree were present.

"We had," writes the former, "eighty-four preachers present, sixty of them the most pleasing, promising young men;" and rather exultingly adds, "in all the Conference there are but three married men."

At this session eighteen candidates were received on trial; fifteen were admitted into full connection, of whom thirteen were elected to Deacon's orders; eight were ordained to the office of elder; eight located; one had died.

The aggregate of members was 18,169 whites, and 5,834 blacks, among the former the increase was 333, among the latter the decrease was 95.

The deficiences were reported at $1,500; the whole amount collected on fourteen circuits was $85.17; the dividend from the Book Concern was $300; from the Chartered Fund $170.

Two collections were made during the session for the benefit of the preachers in the New England Conference, amounting to $105.19, which was placed in the hands of Rev. Henry Boehm. His receipt appears in the Journal

Asbury devotes more space in his journal to matters connected with this session than is usual with him.

"Bishop McKendree preached an ordination sermon on Friday. On the Sabbath I gave them a discourse on *humiliation before God.* I suppose we have had two thousand souls to hear us in the two churches, and our friends are very attentive to entertain us in their houses, abundantly better than we deserve. Our increase in members, unless we allow for a great waste by death, and loss by removals, is not very encouraging; the West and South have given more than three thousand each; here it is not three hundred.

We are defrauded of great numbers by the pains that are taken to keep the blacks from us; their masters are afraid of the influence of our principles. Would not an amelioration in the condition and treatment of slaves have produced more practical good to the poor Africans, than any attempt at their emanci-

pation? The state of society, unhappily, does not admit of this; besides, the blacks are deprived of the means of instruction; who will take the pains to lead them into the way of salvation, and watch over them that they may not stray, but the Methodists? Well, now their masters will not let them come to hear us. What is the personal liberty of the African, which he may abuse, to the salvation of his soul; how may it be compared?"

These reflections are significant. They show how strongly the anti-slaveryism of the Church wrought against the religious interests of the slaves. While a few hundreds were emancipated, thousands were cut off from her ministrations by an unwise and over-zealous legislation. Instead of gently drawing both master and slave within her pale, and teaching them the duties enjoined in the Scriptures, she repelled the master by harsh denunciations, and left the slave beyond the reach of spiritual instruction.

Asbury saw and deplored this state of things in the South, and in this passage certainly questions the wisdom of all attempts at emancipation. Well had it been for the Church, if all her ministers had shared the convictions of this eminently wise and good man; and if he and they had ignored all ecclesiastical legislation on the "vexed question," and given themselves fully to the work of preaching Christ to master and slave.

There can now be no question that our fathers piled difficulties in the pathway of Methodism, by each successive enactment respecting slavery, until at

length they reached their culmination in the violent rending of the Church.

In connection with this session of the Virginia Conference we cannot forbear to mention a fact that probably stands alone in the history of such bodies. This was the presentation of an address from a number of prisoners in the Penitentiary, at Richmond, who had been happily converted and formed into a regular religious society. The Rev. Stith Mead was, under God, the chief instrument in this good work among these unfortunate beings.

As the address gives a full account of this remarkable revival, and is interesting in itself, we present it to the reader as a part of the history of Methodism in Virginia.

"The members of the religious society of prisoners in the Virginia Pententiary, at Richmond, to the bishops, elders, deacons and preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who compose the Virginia Annual Conference, to be held at Tarborough, North Carolina, on the 1st day of February, 1809. sendeth Christian salutation, greeting:

"Beloved Friends:

"We pray that the powerful and gracious presence of our God may be manifested in your assembly with grace, mercy and peace.

Our attention is directed to you as a body proper for us to inform of the gracious manifestations of divine love which we have so happily experienced in the course of the last year, and which has been continued to us to the present time. But we would in-

form you more particularly of the manner in which we were brought under our present impressions.

"Your stationed minister for the city of Richmond after informing himself of the rules and customs of our prison, prepared to render us every means of grace that might tend to reform our hearts and lead us to the hope of glory. Sometime last April he established preaching in this prison on every Sabbath; the preaching was very pointed and convinced of sin; it alarmed our consciences, awakened many of us to a sense of our danger as sinners, and led us to think of its destructive consequences, so awfully exemplified in our present situation. The preaching of the word placed before us the joys of heaven and the torments of hell; the characters of the righteous and wicked were delineated with such perspicuity, that we were made to believe the worst of our condition, and saw that our portion was to be in the lake that burns with fire.

"This alarming view of our condition inclined us to inquire what we should do to be saved. Mr. Mead became very attentive to us, frequently coming into our jail, visiting the different workshops, warning us to flee from the wrath to come, telling us there was an Almighty Redeemer for us as well as other sinners, and urging us to look for pardon through his death and intercession; he set forth the advantages of religion to men in our condition of life, and with his instructions, he offered up prayer for us in the different apartments where we were confined to labor. He appeared to be engaged for our good with such fervency and sympathy as very much affected us, and

convinced us that he was more a friend to us than we had been to ourselves. He also engaged others to attend who were very excellent assistants. He furthermore put religious books into our hands, to instruct us in the way of true happiness.

"These works of faith and labors of love were blessed of God to the salvation of our souls; and when he became acquainted with our faith, and love to God and his people, he advised us to form ourselves into a religious society under such rules as were agreeable to the word of God and compatible with our present condition, in order to watch over each other in love, and assist each other in the way of life; he promised to provide for us the preaching of the Gospel and to afford us all the help he could. We did accord in this, and found we were with believers and desirous souls twenty-two and soon increased to forty-eight in number; but by an honorable pardon and release of some from the President of the United States, and the Governor and council, and the loss of others who have been dismised from the society for immoral conduct, our number has been reduced to thirty-six, of whom seven are black people. In all forty have professed conversion since the beginning of the revival. Since we became a religious society under the care of Mr. Mead, he has continued to watch for our souls, with a ready mind; we are greatly comforted by our faith and hope, and prayer and praise have become a delightful exercise to us.

"The real temper of our hearts is love to God and man, and we find a secret charm in religion that

softens our afflictions. We cheerfully submit to be saved by grace, and we are enabled to put on the whole armor of God, being greatly defended and supported by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

"As we wish to enjoy this inestimable blessing, which we have experienced such advantages in, and which has so much changed our condition, to the inexpressible joy of our hearts, we therefore beg you to consider our case and provide to continue us the ministry of the Gospel. We hope and believe that you will continue to bestow on the poor and imprisoned inhabitants of this jail this best of charities; especially as many of us have a relish for the Gospel of our salvation, and as the benevolent heart of Mr. Abraham Douglass, our keeper, inclines him gladly to afford us every advantage that tends to virtue and morality, and even this best morality, love to the bleeding Lamb.

"As we wish to be under your care, we desire you to provide for us the ministration of God's word, by which we hope to be greatly strengthened ourselves, and to see others of our fellow-prisoners brought to communion with God. If you should find it convenient we should be glad that our dear father in the gospel, Mr. Mead, should be continued to help us in the way to happiness, as he is now acquainted with the nature and ways of our prison, and finds no difficulty in having access to us. He has also a considerable number of religious books which he affords us the use of. But if this is not thought proper, we

hope the Lord will direct you in appointing some other who will be made a blessing to us.

"That the great Master of Assemblies may bless you with his love and presence, that his honor and glory may be greatly advanced, in the comfort of saints and conversion of sinners by your meeting, and that all your deliberations, resolutions and appointments, may tend to the glory of God and the success of his cause, is the prayer of your sorrowful, rejoicing, loving, and affectionate friends in the glorious gospel.

"Signed by order, and in behalf of the Society,

MOSES JACKSON, *Leader*.

15th January, 1809."

Of this gracious work Jesse Lee has given a brief account. Very soon after Mead began his labors among the convicts, the good effects were seen.

A number of the prisoners wept freely under preaching, and the convictions of some were deep and lasting.

At one time while the faces of many were suffused with tears; the preacher proposed that all who were willing to offer themselves as candidates for heaven should stand up; a few rose to their feet. On another occasion, upon a call for penitents, several bowed down under deep distress. The work now spread rapidly, the number of mourners increased at every meeting, several were happily converted; the power of God went through the whole prison. The voice of prayer and praise was heard in almost every cell, until the entire circular building was made to resound

with the praises of God. Many of the conversions were signal and powerful. "I visited them myself," says Lee," and talked with many of them, and could not doubt the reality of their profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." Some of the subjects of this revival were the happy witnesses of the saving power of grace long after they were released from prison.

After the close of the Conference, Asbury made a rapid journey through Virginia. Crossing the Roanoke at Edward's Ferry, he directed his course towards Norfolk. Thence he passed on to Petersburg. He writes: "I expected to find religion more lively in this District, but we are on our lees. I grieved to find that some of the preachers went about visiting instead of being at their work, the spirit of the world, and still worse, *politics*. O death, death! O, Lord God, keep thy ministers faithful." At William Blunt's he preached to a few people who had come through a dark night at a short warning. He lamented that except at a few places there was great langor and indifference among the people, yet he prayed and hoped for better times. After preaching at Petersburg, he rode home with "John Ryall Bradley, now warm in his first love; he was strangely brought to God. He was alone on a Sabbath day and was reading, what he indeed seldom read, his prayer-book; suddenly he was powerfully struck with keen conviction; he began to pray without book, with all his might; what followed came of course." At Richmond he preached and found a "change there for the better." He remained but a single day and pressed on to meet the Baltimore Conference at Har-

risonburg. "We seldom lodge at a house," he writes, "without the company of preachers; we are pleased to see them, but would be better pleased to know they were on their circuits, faithfully at work."

At the Conference at Harrisonburg a strange scene occurred. We give the account in the language of Rev. Joseph Carson, who was an eye witness:

"At this period there were few married men in the Conference to be obliged—such a thing as a 'Bishop's Council' was unknown, and as long as he presided, Bishop Asbury made his own appointments.

"I remember a remark the old Bishop made at this Conference, which produced quite a panic in the body. He was much perplexed about his appointments. 'Brother A,' said he, 'must go here, and brother B could not go there, &c., &c.;' until at length the old gentleman straightened himself up and with an impatient gesture, exclaimed, 'I would not give one single preacher for a half dozen married ones.' Whereupon, S. G. Roszell rose and said, 'I ask a location, sir;' then followed John Pitts, then another and another till nearly every one in the condemned list had made the same request.

"The Bishop looked startled, and asked what was the matter. 'Why,' answered one, 'if that is your opinion of married preachers, we will receive no more appointments at your hands.' 'What did I say,' asked he. His remark was repeated. 'Did I say that?' said he now fully aroused from his reverie. 'Yes, Bishop,' was heard from every side. 'Well, my brethren, forgive me, *I will say it back*,' answered the good Bishop. 'Then, sir, we withdraw our ap-

plications,' said they, and all was harmony and love again."

The records of revivals during this year in Virginia are meagre in the extreme. Yet the Church was not entirely left without the refreshing showers of grace. At some of the Camp Meetings there were powerful manifestations of the Spirit. At such a meeting near Lynchburg which lasted only a few days nearly eighty souls were converted, at another, near Abner Early's, eighteen miles from the same town, 162 persons were converted in course of a week. Others were held in different parts of the State, at which many sinners were brought to God, and the Christians greatly encouraged in all the work of faith.

The venerable Joseph Carson has furnished some interesting recollections of his field of labor for this year. His circuit was Greenbrier, embracing the whole of that county with parts of Bath and Giles. There were twenty-two appointments for four weeks, some of them fifty miles apart. "I had been told," he says, "that it was a rude, rough country, and a very hard circuit." This he found to be true, it not being "so very pleasant to have to use *bear's meat* for both *bread* and *meat*." The preaching was mostly done in school houses and private dwellings, there being but five churches, small, rude buildings, which scarcely deserved that name. One of his most zealous and efficient members was Aaron Burr, a cousin of the illustrious and unfortunate politician of the same name.

Mr. Carson relates an incident that occurred under

his ministry in this circuit, which we will not forbear to give, though from the unbeliever it may provoke an incredulous smile. The humble Christian will know how to regard it.

"While preaching at New River on one occasion a most singular circumstance transpired which I can account for in no other way than as a special interposition of Providence. I was about half through my sermon when an old man entered the church; he had hardly taken his seat before it was strangely but strongly impressed upon me that he had been *bitten by a snake.* I endeavored to disregard it, but it haunted me so that I became confused, and could not proceed with my sermon. I stopped and told the congregation that I could not proceed until I had asked a question, and then, pointing to the man, I inquired if he had not been bitten by a snake. 'O yas,' answered the old Dutchman in his broadest brogue, 'be sure dat ish true, but never you mind dat, you go on, I wants to hear your sermon out.' 'No, no, my good friend,' I replied, you must attend to your body as well as your soul,' and dismissing the congregation we turned our attention to him. His leg was then so much swelled that he could not stand, and before we could get him home, about two miles, his tongue was swelled out of his mouth. They dug a hole in the ground and put his leg in it, where he was kept till the swelling abated. That day four weeks the old man was out to hear the sermon finished."

This incident is as remarkable as many of those recorded by Wesley in his journal. As the fruit of

Mr. Carson's hard toil in this wild region one hundred and fifty souls were added to the Church.

In midwinter of this year we find Asbury making a rapid journey from the South towards Virginia. He "passed like a mail through South and North Carolina."

He was greatly enfeebled and suffered extremely from the excessive cold, but on he went, "shivering, eating a morsel and praying." His flesh complained of cold riding and the labor of preaching, but he prayed to be made perfect through suffering. An old fashioned Virginia home with its blazing fire, and cheerful Christian friends, and a quiet room for prayer and meditation, no man enjoyed more than Asbury. "Through rain and snow, without eating or prayer, although we stopped twice, we came to William Birdsong's. O how comfortable; and we can pray here." But his own failing health and the ravages of disease among his friends and co-laborers cast a gloom over his spirits. His "dear brother Boehm," one of his most faithful travelling companions, had suffered greatly on the route with "an awful cough and fevers." William Graves was almost gone at fifty-five. Robert Jones was a helpless man of seventy-two, sunk into second childhood; but God was with him. The strong men were falling around him; he, their leader, was fast closing his illustrious career. But his labors did not abate. Six times a week he preached, by day and by night, as he passed the scenes of his former toil. To the little gatherings in private houses he preached with the same fervor and eloquence that

charmed and instructed the crowded congregations in cities. "At James Rogers," he says, "I gave them a discourse, and spoke as if a thousand had been present." Surely he might say, if any man could, "the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."

Asbury and McKendree reached Petersburg and opened the Conference of 1810 on the 8th of February. The records of this session are brief and devoid of interest. Seven were admitted on trial, after having been examined before the Conference; fifteen were elected to deacon's orders; nine to elder's orders; two were discontinued, and ten located. The numbers were reported at 18,864 whites, and 6,150 colored. The increase was 362 white and 411 colored members. The deficiencies in the preachers' salaries amounted to $1,618.65; to meet this there was received from the circuits $292.65; from the Chartered Fund one eighth of the profits, viz., $140; and from the Book Concern $300. The committee of distribution made a dividend of $59 to each claimant, "taking into consideration those who were some time absent."

The number of circuits reported was 42, the number of preachers stationed 77.

We find in the Minutes of this year, for the first time, the following: "the evening was spent in examining into the characters of the elders;" and this appears near the close: "Some time was spent in cursory conversation respecting the duties of the several orders in the ministry."

Of the progress of Methodism in the State during

this year scarcely a trace remains. The history of Jesse Lee closes with the past year, and no other pen was employed in recording the trials and triumphs of the Church. From the interesting papers furnished by Rev. J. Carson, we are enabled to supply this omission so far as one portion of the State is concerned. The Northern Neck, a fruitful and inviting field, was this year favored with the services of this excellent and useful minister.

"This year," he writes, "I was sent to Westmoreland. The circuit embraced Westmoreland, Richmond and Lancaster counties (now divided into four circuits, I believe,), with twenty-seven appointments in twenty-eight days, and class meetings at each place. Churches were not so rare here as on my former circuits, for besides our own, I found several old colonial churches unoccupied, with a class at each. I also preached at the houses of brothers Pope, C. L. Eskridge, Doggett, Forrester, Mitchell and Spriggs; these last four were local preachers. Brother Doggett was the father of our own beloved Dr. Doggett—a worthy father of so noble a son—and there, when an infant of a few weeks, I have dandled him, little dreaming that he would ever occupy so prominent a position in the ranks of Methodism. These, together with the Ball, Hughtell, Conway and Cole families formed the staff of our Church when I first went there.

"I will give you an account of the first camp meeting on that circuit. It was held on the land of brother Lamkin, the father of Rev. J. J. Lamkin, near Kinsale, in the month of August.

"I was discouraged by my presiding elder, colleague and congregations, 'for,' said they, 'your predecessor attempted it and failed;' but I resolved *to try*. I had to superintend all the arrangements, for they were ignorant of the proper plan for an encampment. Major Bailey, a lumber merchant in Kinsale, offered me the loan of plank enough for seats, provided I would be responsible for all that might be broken, to which I agreed.

"I never believed in many 'rules and regulations' on a camp-ground, so before the services began I made all my requests from the stand. These were that the ministers and official members should occupy the altar, that the magistrates should take seats in the stand, and that the congregation should refrain from standing on the seats. We had no ministerial aid from a distance that I remember, only the presiding elder and ourselves. My request to the magistrates was responded to by sixteen of the order coming forward and taking the seats designated.

"On the first day one of the magistrates so far forgot himself as to stand on the bench. I caught his eye, and looked to the ground as a signal for him to get down. He felt the reproof so keenly that he took offence at it, and told every one that I had publicly insulted him and that he would horsewhip me. I was informed of his threats and advised by my friends not to go out, but I assured them I did not fear him and should go about my business. In the afternoon while walking round the ground I met him face to face. He stopped me, saying, Mr. Carson, I

wish to speak to you.' 'I'll hear you, sir,' said I. 'How came you to insult me in the public congregation?' I assured him he had quite misunderstood me, that he was one to whom I was looking for protection, that I feared the effect of his example, and that I only intended to remind him of this by a look. 'Yes, but such *a look* I never saw before.' 'I ask your pardon, sir,' said I, 'for all I have *said* against you;' thus we parted friends, and he was found on the 'magistrates' bench' every day afterwards.

"On the second day we had a disturbance of a more serious nature, but it was the last. While the exercises at the altar were in progress several persons mounted the benches, but on being asked to resume their seats all did so except one young man. I went to him and repeated the request, still he refused, saying he was in Virginia, and would do as he pleased. I replied to him that Virginians were generally *polite*, and I was sorry to see him bringing a reproach on my native state, and again urged my request. 'I won't do it,' said he. 'Then I'll see that you do,' I replied and started off. As I turned from him he drew his knife, and simultaneously with that the whisper arose, 'Take care, he has a knife.' I turned upon him immediately, and daunted by this movement, he hastily shut the knife, catching his hand in it, and cutting it very badly. Major Bailey seeing the crowd, came forward and asked 'What was the matter?' 'Not much,' said I, 'only a young man behaving a little rudely.' 'Show him to me,' said he! and when pointed out, he proved to be his own

cousin! he took him off to a tent, and I returned to the stand. Very soon a messenger informed me that Major B. wished to see me. When I went he said, 'I have ordered this young man to jail for interrupting public worship, but he is also liable to punishment for an assault upon your life; what shall be done with him?' 'Nothing, sir.' 'Well then he goes to jail at any rate, unless he can give security.' Finding that no one intended to offer himself, I said, 'Release the young man, sir, I'll be his security.' All looked surprised, and he bursting into tears, exclaimed, 'If I don't behave like a gentleman while I stay on this camp-ground, you may cut my throat.'

"From this time the best order prevailed, and we had about fifty converts; this was our inaugural camp-meeting on that circuit. We had a continuous revival throughout the year, and we added 400 members to the Church."

The Conference for 1811 assembled at Raleigh, North Carolina, on the 7th of February. Bishops Asbury and McKendree presided. There were fifty members present. "P. Bruce, Thomas L. Douglass and John Buxton were appointed a committee to prepare rules to regulate the Conference in their deliberations." This is the first notice we have of such a committee. Fifteen candidates were admitted on trial; twelve were elected to deacon's, and ten to elders' orders; nine located; two were dropped; one readmitted. The aggregate of members was reported at 19,345 whites, and 6,232 colored; the increase was only 481 whites and 82 colored. The deficien-

cies amounted to $1,080; amount collected—we give the aggregate from each district:—

Norfolk,	$152.20
Raleigh,	37.95
James River,	137.63
New Berne,	5.00
Yadkin,	2.50
Meherrin,	228.68
Bal. of Ste. Davis' legacy,	90.00
From Chartered Fund,	150.00
" Book Concern,	300.00
	$1,103.96

A collection amounting to $64 was taken up for "our brethren in the New England Conference," for which the receipt of Henry Boehm is recorded.

The number of circuits was reported at 46; eighty-two preachers received appointments. The spirit of grace rested on the ministers of Christ during the session. "I believe," says Asbnry, "that much good was done in Raleigh. On Sunday I preached in the State House to two thousand souls. We had while Conference was in session preaching three times a day; the meetings were sometimes held till midnight."

No sooner was the Conference over than this indefatigable man was on his way to Virginia. He was glad to be among his old friends once more. A cold ride brought him to John Seward's, Brunswick; the next day he came to Charles Harris', where he was kindly and comfortably entertained. "My old Vir-

ginia friends," he says, "have disappeared from the earth; but it is no small consolation that they have left me their offspring—these are the children of faith and prayer. Witness the Georges, the Booths, and many others. And God has heard the prayers of the poor negroes for their masters; surely he is no respecter of persons." He passed through Richmond on his journey and preached on the Sabbath. It was probably on this occasion that an incident occurred which brought about the completion of the Methodist Church on Shockoe Hill. The first steps towards the erection of this house had been taken the previous year, and by great exertions it was so far completed as to be placed under cover, and in this condition it remained until the time of Asbury's visit. The morning after his arrival he called together a number of the leading members, repaired to the unfinished church, and upon a few loose boards laid down for the occasion he held a prayer-meeting, and urged the brethren to go forward and complete the building. Richmond still appears to have been an uncongenial soil for Methodism. Asbury scarcely ever makes a remark concerning it in his journal, except to state that he preached in the place.

It was during this brief visit to the city that he addressed a letter to Rev. T. L. Douglass, giving an outline for a history of Methodism in America. As this is a document of much interest, we here present it to the reader. So far as we know, it has never before appeared in print:

"I have stricken out a plan for a complete letter history of Methodism by our presiding elders, taking

the work by Districts from the time the first circuit was formed in the District and the state of the District in 1812. This will be done by the printed Minutes in my hands.

Tell the year the first circuit was formed, &c., and then give.

1. The number of meeting houses in the District.

2. The number of congregations established in private houses, meeting houses, or chapels.

3. The number of Societies, and of members in the District.

4. The number of travelling and local preachers in the same.

5. The general number of annual Camp Meetings in the District, numbers attending, souls professing converting grace, days of continuance.

6. Name any preachers or members, brethren and sisters, that from good testimony may have been known to die in triumph; and any notable characters that have been useful, whether travelling or local preachers.

7. The nomination (name) of the circuits, the counties, &c., the District embraces, the rivers it lieth upon, and boundaries and tract from East to West, North, South.

8. Revivals that have been in several parts of the District as well also the present state of the work.

"I wish each Presiding Elder to collect his materials and to get a complete historical letter, neatly, correctly done. These letters to be read in Annual Conference and then handed to the General Conference. It will make a grand history in about fifty

letters. You will ask how are we to obtain information? I answer, by the circuit preachers. Let them give names, numbers; the name of every local preacher; every congregation by the name of the man at whose house they meet; also the name of every chapel. You might collect the approbation as well as the information of some of the aged and most respectable men, or get them to sign your letter as believing it to be true.

"I desire that you forthwith write this as the wish of the Episcopacy to all the presiding elders in the Virginia Conference. I also desire you to write to William Burke, Shelbyvlle, Kentucky, that he may write to all the presiding elders in the West. I also wish you to write to William M. Kennedy, Columbia, South Carolina, and request him to write to all the presiding elders in the South Conference to be ready at the next Conference. The plan is plain and possible. We can ascertain the first circuit of the district, and in what year formed, and then how the district grew till 1812. Tell the presiding elders to lose no time; a particular history must come from the Districts to the Annual Conferences, and from them to the General Conference. It will be proper to give a distinct account of our cities and towns, the number of houses of God, the number we probably preach to weekly.

"You think the whole letter will be a task; it will be a phocas; it will be much in little. One line may be a history. I am sensible it may be done with attention in one day. I saw the Bishop [McKen-

dree] was taken with the plan. I have matured it in riding through snow and frost."

Of this outline Douglass writes; "The plan laid down in the preceding letter was forwarded as the Bishop requested, but the work was attended to only partially, and no returns were made to Conference except in two or three instances, and these were far from being full or complete. But I am satisfied the Bishop was of opinion his plan would not die, and although he should not live to see it fully acted upon, he was nevertheless persuaded that it was the most correct and efficient one by which to collect and transmit to posterity an account of the introduction, rise and progress of Methodism in America."

Douglass appears to have been of the same opinion, for so late as 1834 he recommended to the Western preachers the adoption of this plan of Asbury.

We may truly regret the failure of the Bishop's cherished scheme, and without agreeing that its execution would have given us a "grand history in fifty letters," we may be sure that a vast amount of information, and many of the most touching scenes and incidents in the march of Methodism have been irrecoverably lost.

The revival of religion among the churches was quite extensive this year, particularly at the Camp Meetings. These meetings began as early as May and were continued till late in the fall. At one held at Tate's old field near Lynchburg, under the direction of Rev. T. L. Douglass, there was a gracious outpouring of the Spirit. The work of conversion among sinners, and of sanctification among Chris-

tians went forward with glorious fervor; at another, held not far from the town of Manchester, thirty souls were converted; at a third in Buckingham, which lasted six days, seventy were born of God; at a fourth in Amherst, in the space of seven days, ninety-six were converted and fourteen sanctified.

In the spring a great work broke out in the county of Pittsylvania under the preaching of Stith Mead. It went on through the summer and scores of souls were reclaimed from the power of sin. In a simple but earnest letter to Mead, a writer says: "We have had glorious seasons from the Lord since you were with us. The Lord has shattered old Satan's kingdom, and the devil is mighty mad with you for it. The children of Zion are much stirred up to pray, and the Lord has revived his work in a wonderful manner."

The camp meetings held near Richmond gave a great impulse to religion in the city, and nearly one hundred professed conversion, of whom sixty were received into the Church. Lynchburg also caught the flame from the camp-meetings near by, and about twenty members were added to the church in that town.

But the most glorious and powerful camp-meeting of the year was held near Winchester. "I one night," says Rev. J. Carson, "counted three hundred penitents on the ground. We continued the exercises till daybreak, and the fruits of that night's work were one hundred souls happily converted to God. This mighty work seems to have been produced by the shout of Sister Jefferson, the wife of

Hamilton Jefferson, who received me into the Church. She had for years been a doubting Christian, but while sitting in the tent of brother Reid of Winchester, apparently unconscious of all that was passing around her, she suddenly sprang up and rushing out of doors, with uplifted hands and eyes, exclaiming, "Hosanna! Hosanna!! Hosanna!!!"

The crowd instantly gathered around her; the disorder likely to result from allowing 5,000 people to become unduly excited occurred to all the ministers, and without concert they all adopted the same plan, which was to march around the encampment and sing until seats could be arranged at different places for some of the strong lunged preachers to have their separate congregations. This was the beginning of the custom of marching at Camp Meetings, which is observed even at the present day, though much abused."

In his reminiscences of this year, Mr. Carson gives an instance of a signal answer to prayer which is worthy of record:

"While travelling for my health, which was then fast failing, I passed through Botetourt, and hearing that Rev. Samuel Mitchell was ill, called to see him. When I reached his house I found Drs. French and Jennings with him, both of whom pronounced him beyond hope. As I approached his bed he extended his hand, saying, 'Brother Carson, I am almost gone, but I want you to pray for me.' We kneeled around his couch; I seemed to have remarkable access in prayer, and felt an unusual degree of faith that our prayers would be answered—I felt that he would re-

cover. When we rose one of the physicians went to him, examined his pulse, and with a look of amazement exclaimed: 'The fever is broke, he may get well.' From that hour he began to improve and speedily recovered."

As the time for the Virginia Conference approached, Asbury was toiling up from the South. It is astonishing how much labor his feeble frame could endure; but he "endured as seeing him who is invisible."

"We have made," he says, "seven hundred miles since we left Camden, through frost, floods, cold and hunger; poor men, and poor horses! Well this life is not eternal."

On reaching Suffolk he found his good friend, "Richard Yerberry had gone from poor Suffolk to the rich inheritance of glory; he was almost a prodigy of affliction and grace."

At Portsmouth he preached to a full house; at Norfolk he preached and met the Society. All along his route death had preceded him. His old friend, General Wells, and his daughter had departed in peace since his last visit. "I visited," he says, "as is my custom, the graves of the deceased."

This was a beautiful trait in the character of Asbury, he seems never to have passed the grave of a friend, without lingering near it as if he would hold communion with the glorified spirit. A weary ride of twenty-five miles brought him sick, and utterly worn down to Bryant's in Prince George. "They put me to bed very unwell. Here are two meeting houses and the gospel is brought back to the vicinity of

Prince George Court House after thirty years absence. No time was to be lost—I took tartar, and had a serious spell while it lasted." But the very next morning he was up, and "rode a mile and gave a sermon." "My breast is sore," he writes, "and my heart in pain for Petersburg." Why he was pained for this place he does not tell us; perhaps because of divisions in the Society, or the low state of religion.

On the 20th of February he opened the Conference of 1812 at Richmond. Bishop McKendree was also present. There were sixty-six members in attendance; eight young preachers were received on trial, after being examined by the Bishop before the Conference; six travelling and sixteen local preachers were elected Deacons; eight travelling preachers to Elders' Orders; two were discontinued; eleven located; two were returned as supernumerary; two had died; one was re-admitted.

The deficiency in salaries was $1,325.98. Collected from the circuits, $506.75; received from the Chartered Fund, $100; from the Book Concern $300.

The membership was reported at 19,157 whites; and 6,275 colored; notwithstanding the numerous revivals of the year there was a loss of 188 whites, and a gain of only 43 blacks. The cause of this was "the great emigrations westward." "Old Virginia decreases in the number she gives to the Methodists," says Asbury, "but New Virginia gains."

The list of circuits numbered 42; 75 preachers were stationed.

We append several extracts from the Minutes of this year which will show the manner in which the

Conference conducted business, and the strictness with which it watched over the conduct of the preachers:

"J. C. B. having travelled two years and filled up his probation as a preacher he was eligible to admission into full connection, and ordination to deacon's orders; his character was blameless, but as he is absent and declines travelling on account of temporal business, his name is dropped.

"L. B. having been in the travelling connection two years his character was blameless, but as it appears in consequence of sickness, he has not been able to attend his appointments, and still remains in a low state of health, his name is to be dropped, and in case he should recover his health, and an opening offer, the P. E. may employ him.

"J. M. having filled up his probation, he was admitted into full connection, and elected to the office of a deacon, but, as it was thought, some things were attached to him which the Conference thought improper, such as want of seriousness in the families, and want of plainness in dress, or appearance, &c., the Conference directed that one of the Bishops should admonish him before the Conference, which was done.

"After hearing charges against H. H., and considerable debate, the following record was directed to be made: Brother H. has been guilty of some imprudences, and the Conference directed that he should be admonished by one of the Bishops before the Conference, which was done.

"J. M. was examined before Conference; some

questions were asked respecting slavery, which he was not prepared to answer; the case is therefore laid over until he has time to mature his thoughts. Tuesday morning—J. M., having matured his thoughts on the subject of slavery, answered the question proposed on Saturday; he said he thought slavery wrong, and that he was not in the spirit of it, and if ever an opening was made, and it should be in his power, he felt prepared to say that he would give his slaves their liberty.

"Complaints were made against H. W. of imprudences, for which he was admonished, and he promised to be more cautious, and to act more consistently as a Christian minister for the future.

"W. W. H., who has married and desisted from travelling, applied for a location; but as it appears to Conference that he has married an irreligious woman, and is inattentive to preaching, the Conference voted to withhold his location, and to suspend him, as a preacher, six months."

The following entry we find in reference to the election of delegates to the General Conference:

The Conference proceeded to the business of ascertaining who are to go as our representatives at the next General Conference, and upon examination of the number of our members, it appears that we are entitled to eleven representatives, who are sent by delegation. On ballotting, P. Bruce, T. L. Douglass, John Buxton, William Jean, John Early, Jesse Lee, James Boyd, Richard Lattimore, Cannellem H. Hines, Charles Calloway, and John C. Ballew, were duly elected, and appointed to represent us in the

General Conference of our Church, to be held in the city of New York in May next."

Singular as it may appear, this was the first session of the Conference ever held at Richmond, although it had been forty years since Methodism was first introduced into the State. Including the two churches, the membership in the city amounted only to 256 whites, and 47 colored.

Asbury introduces a remark in connection with this Conference which shows that a change, very slight, however, was passing over the minds of the preachers on the question of slavery. He says, "a charge had been brought against me for ordaining a slave; but there was no further pursuit of the case when it was discovered that I was ready with my certificates to prove his freedom." From this, one thing is certain, that in the judgment of the Virginia Conference, at that day, it was wrong to "ordain a slave."

The Conference over, the two Bishops began a tour through the lower counties. Facing a "cutting north-east wind," they rode thirty miles to Roper's Chapel, where Asbury "preached some awful truths." The night that followed was one "of great suffering," but the next morning they rode into James City, "and preached in the Chapel to many people." The next day, in Williamsburg, Asbury "preached with a full mind, but failing voice." The day following, they "rode near forty miles to breakfast with an English family, the Whitfields; and went forward to lodge with George Hope, a ship-builder from Whitehaven." The reference here is doubtless to the family of the venerable Richard Whitfield, who still

survives at the age of eighty-six, a Methodist of the olden times, full of faith and zeal, joyfully waiting till the Master shall call him to the home of the angels. Perhaps he is the only person now living in Virginia, who has heard the gospel from the lips of John Wesley. He was at the time a mere youth, residing in his native town in England, but he still retains a vivid recollection of Wesley's venerable appearance and impressive manner in the pulpit. He relates an interesting incident connected with the occasion. Wesley wore his hair long, falling in curls upon his neck and shoulders. It was arranged with great care, and especially attracted the attention of two gentlemen who were present. One of them insisted that Wesley wore a wig; the other, with equal earnestness, that he did not. The dispute ended in a wager between them. Placing themselves near the door, when Wesley came out, they accosted him, and stated the nature of their dispute. He replied, "Gentlemen, you are both right; I wear a wig, but it is made of my own hair;" and then added that he found so much difficulty in keeping it in proper order that he had had it cut off and made into a wig. Of course neither gained the wager.*

The family of George Hope was one of the first to unite with the Methodists in Hampton, and still has its useful and honorable representatives in her communion. In the "new brick house in Hampton," Asbury preached and "ordained Robert Gillum and Brother Evans, local Deacons." They crossed the York River at Yorktown, and found the place "declining in numbers and wickedness, because of

* Mr. Whitfield has since died.

the decrease of trade and strong drink." "At Philip Tabb's, Esquire—a great farmer and a kind and hospitable gentleman,"—they found a welcome and quiet home. "It rained on Sunday," he says, "but we had two hours in the cold house to utter our testimony." They found a comfortable home with "Brother Bellamy, a witness of the sanctifying power of grace." "I go forward," says this apostolic man, "in rain, and in temptation, and affliction, and great grief for souls." In King and Queen he found "Father Mann" still living, at whose house he had "preached thirty-three years past." "The Baptists," he says, "have the rule in Queen Anne [King and Queen] and Essex. We must not be envious—we have it, and are getting it, and will continue to get it, if we are faithful, still more abundantly throughout the whole continent."

He preached at Fredericksburg, and found that the Methodists had "done great good there." "Since they began to preach, the Baptists and Presbyterians have built meeting houses." From this place he toiled on "through mud and mist, stemming the cold and boisterous north-west wind," till he reached Leesburg, the seat of the Baltimore Conference. They had "a solemn, loving, peaceful" session. Arriving at the ferry, after the close of Conference, he had a signal answer to prayer, which, strange to say, he hesitates to acknowledge as such. "It blew a hurricane. I lifted up my heart in prayer to God. There was, in a few minutes, a great calm, which all those with me witnessed; but I will not say it was in answer to prayer."

But few memorials have been preserved of the progress of religion among the churches in Virginia this year. There were, however, gracious outpourings of the Spirit in some quarters. In the Williamsburg circuit, there was a fine revival, and many additions were made to the Church. Stith Mead was the chief instrument in this good work. The first signs of success appeared at Hampton, where some twelve or fifteen souls were converted. In May, at a Camp Meeting in New Kent, the power of God was signally displayed in the salvation of seventy souls. Another meeting was held near Hampton, at which upwards of fifty professed to be born from above. At a third Camp Meeting, held at Willis' Meeting House, there was a copious outpouring of the Spirit; 102 happy converts cast in their lot with the people of God. The result of the years' work on the circuit, was above 300 converted, and 200 added to the Church. The disparity in these numbers resulted from the fact that, as usual, the Methodist revivals largely contributed to build up other churches.

In Richmond the work progressed to some extent under the labors of Jesse Lee and Charles Calloway. Dr. Lee has given us a sketch of his uncle's labors in the city. "With his colleague he alternated, preaching at one Church in the morning, at the other in the afternoon. Pastoral visiting was attended to by both; but the government of the Church rested on his shoulders. One who knew him well at this period, and was a witness of his labor in the ministry, bears the following testimony of his diligence and industry: 'He was certainly the most laborious preacher we

ever had. During the summer months he constantly preached four times on the Sabbath, and attended meeting almost every night in the week. His practice was, when he preached on Shockoe Hill in the afternoon, immediately after service in the Church, to go to Buchanan's Spring, where there was generally a large company of idlers, and, mounting a table, he would preach a sermon appropriate to their circumstances. And when he was in Old Town Church, in the afternoon, after service he would repair to a vacant lot opposite old St. John's, and beneath the shade of the venerable oaks, one of which is still standing, then occupying the place, he would gather the crowds from the graveyard, and the houses near at hand, and preach the gospel of the grace of God with a full heart and a ready utterance.'" A gentleman capable of judging, said of his ministry: "When Mr. Lee commences his sermon, it always reminds me of the hoisting of the flood-gate of a mill; there is one incessant pouring of the sweetest eloquence I ever heard from any man in my life." Besides these heavy labors, he devoted a portion of his time to the convicts in the Penitentiary. This prison was one of the regular preaching places of the station, and was supplied by Lee or his colleague, or some of the local preachers in the city.

At a Camp Meeting held in the month of September, some distance below Richmond, and not far from James River, a scene occurred in which gravity and humor, on the part of Jesse Lee, were strangely blended. We have had an account of this meeting from Rev. Philip Courtney, one of the prominent

actors, but we extract the following sketch from Dr. Lee's work, presuming that Father Courtney was his informant.

It was held during the war, and a considerable number of merchant vessels had run up the river to avoid the English cruisers hovering about the coast. The meeting was progressing in good style, when one one night, after the service had concluded, and the people had retired to their tents, a large party of sailors, headed by a Captain Swift, and all well under the maddening influence of strong drink, came upon the ground, full of evil intent, and evidently determined upon a row. The ministers were all in bed; but the noise made by the drunken sailors prevented all chance of sleep. It was midnight; and instead of abatement of the disturbance, it rather grew worse. At this stage of the affair, Mr. Lee left his bed; and inviting two or three others to join him, they hastily dressed themselves and went out among the crowd. Others from the tents and the neighborhood were mingled with the sailors—a large and noisy crowd. Followed by his companions, Mr. Lee went into the stand; and addressing the multitude, told them it they would come under the arbor they would have a sermon. A burst of noisy merriment followed this announcement; but the leader, with a mock gravity, came in, and the rest accompanied him and were soon seated. When all was still, Mr. Lee told the Rev. P. Courtney to preach them a sermon. Surprised, but willing, and not knowing whereunto the thing would grow, he complied, and took for his text the very appropriate words, "At midnight Paul and Silas

prayed, and sang praises to God." He had not been long preaching before a change came over the spirit of that reckless crowd of men. The dimly lighted grove, the hush of the night, the heavy tones of the preacher's voice, the cold autumnal air, and the stupifying effects of their potations, soon produced drowsiness, and this was succeeded by the deep and dreamless sleep of drunkenness. The infection spread rapidly; it was soon general; all were asleep. The preacher was careering on, midway in his discourse, when a pull at the tail of his coat brought him rather suddenly to a halt. "Stop," said Mr. Lee. Then pausing to see if any missed the sound, and no one stirring, he picked up his hat, saying, "Softly!—let's go to bed," and led the way back to the tent. The next morning, chilled to the bone, and stiff in every muscle, the sailors might be seen bending over the camp fires, with "curses, not loud, but deep," against the man that befooled them, drunk as they were, into listening to a midnight sermon! Ere the trumpet called the worshippers to public prayers, the sailors had disappeared from the encampment, and came no more to disturb its hallowed employments."

The first delegated General Conference assembled at the city of New York on the first day of May. This body was composed of ninety delegates, representing eight Annual Conferences. The attention of the Conference was mainly directed to the settlement of two questions; one in reference to the propriety of electing local preachers to the office of elder, the other, respecting the manner of appointing presiding elders. The first had been discussed in several pre-

vious General Conferences, and was now vehemently opposed by Jesse Lee and other leading men, but after a full and able discussion, the measure was carried, and has since made a part of our ecclesiastical system.

The "Presiding Elder Question" had also been agitated as early as the General Conference of 1800, when William Ormond, of Virginia, moved, "that the yearly Conference be authorized by this General Conference to nominate and elect their own presiding elders," but the motion was lost.

In 1808 the effort to make this office elective was repeated. Ezekial Cooper and Joshua Wells moved that "each Annual Conference, respectively, without debate, shall annually choose by ballot its own presiding elders;" this was lost by a vote of 73 to 52. At this session a determined effort was made to carry this measure. There was also a kindred design to make the board of presiding elders a legal advisory council to the Bishops in making the appointments. The question came up on a motion of Laban Clarke to make the presiding elders elective by the Annual Conferences. To this Nicholas Snethen moved as an amendment, "that the Bishops shall have the power to nominate them, and if the first nomination is not ratified by a majority of the Annual Conference, the Bishop shall proceed to nominate until a choice is made; and in all cases each nomination shall be determined separately by ballot without debate;" this was lost. The original motion then came up, and was rejected by a vote of 45 to 42.

Unquestionably, in the opinion of Asbury, these

efforts were a covert attack on the Episcopacy; and we think he judged correctly. He had long anticipated trouble at this Conference. In a letter to Christopher Fry, dated September, 1810, he says: "Perhaps there may be a struggle in the next General Conference, whether the government shall be Presbyterian and local, or Episcopal in its small remains. If the poison of electioneering obtains, wo to presiding elders. They are the Bishops' men; keep them back. But it will remain to know what powers are recorded, what the General Conference ceded to the delegated Conference—and if in dismembering Episcopacy they will not dissolve themselves and violate the constitution. Bishop McKendree may say, 'They made me; let them unmake me.' I cannot say so altogether; if I was made *at all* by the hand of the Lord and good men, I was made before *they* were; before some forward children were born or born again. I cannot cast them off. I cannot do without them, if they can do without me. I must continue in the ship, *storm or calm*, near the helm, or before the mast. As long as I can, I will be with them."

Referring to this contest, he says in his journal: "After a serious struggle of two days in General Conference to change the mode of appointing presiding elders, it remains as it was. Means had been used to keep back every presiding elder who was known to be favorable to appointments by the Bishops; and long and earnest speeches have been made to influence the minds of the members. Lee, Shinn and Snethen were of a side; and these are great men."

In a letter to T. L. Douglass, written after the close of the Conference, he refers to this measure in stronger terms:

"Such a deliberate attempt to take away the last remains of Episcopacy, deprives us of our privileges, wholesale and retail. Ah! have I lost the confidence of the American people and preachers? or of only a few overgrown members that have been disappointed; and the *city lords* who wish to be Bishops, Presiding Elders, Deacons, and to reign without us—over us?" Again, in the same letter, he says: "Oh, to assault a man they know can neither fight nor fly! For was it a man's covenant, I could soon show General George Washington—resign." In another letter a few months later, he writes as if the matter preyed upon his mind and troubled him sorely; "In former times I have been impartial, indifferent, and have appointed good men that I knew were for a Presbyterian party; but since they have made such an unwarrantable attack upon the Constitution in the very first General Conference after adoption, I will only trust such men as far as I can see them; and let such men know that I know their principles, and disapprove them. One argument might have been used at General Conference—that at the Constitution Conference (i. e., of 1808, which formed and adopted the Constitution), when the Constitution was ready for adoption, it was suspended to try what afterwards would be secured in it—who shall appoint the presiding elders?—lost then, and three or four times over. But behold and wonder! Oh, my son, we must fix our eyes steadily upon pages 23, 24 of our Discipline."

The repugnance of Asbury to this measure was evinced at the General Conference, as well as afterwards in letters to his friends. It has been said that he presided during the most exciting periods of the debate, and showed his opposition by sitting with his back to the speakers. Jesse Lee, who was in favor of the plan, had already made a speech. His opponent, in replying, said that no man of common sense would use such arguments as Lee had presented. When Lee rose to make his rejoinder, he said with a peculiar tone and manner: "Mr. President, Brother —— has said that 'no man of common sense' would have used such arguments as I did, in what I said when I was up before on this question. I am therefore compelled to believe, Mr. President, that the brother thinks me a man of *uncommon* sense." "Yes! yes!" said the Bishop, turning half round in his chair. "Yes! yes! Brother Lee, you *are* a man of uncommon sense." "Then, sir," said Lee, very quickly and pleasantly, "I beg that uncommon attention may be paid to what I am about to say." The Bishop resumed his position, and Lee went on with his speech.

The Conference of 1813 was held at New Berne, North Carolina. It met on the 10th of February. Bishops Asbury and McKendree presided. "We opened our Conference," says Asbury, "in Sister Tenkard's elegant school-room; we had great order, great union, and great dispatch of business." There were forty members in attendance. Thirteen young preachers were admitted on trial; twelve were received into full connection. The Conference was

extremely cautious in raising men to orders in the Church. Among the candidates for the Deaconate, one was rejected because "in some instances he had been imprudent in finding fault with the families where he stopped, concerning his diet, sleeping too late in the morning," &c; another was rejected because "it appeared he had both the first and second year been engaged in courting, which the Conference thought highly improper for a man so young in the ministry;" on his promise of amendment, he was admitted into full connection, but not to Deacon's orders; thirteen were elected to Elder's orders; thirteen located; one was returned as supernumerary; one had died. The number of local preachers admitted to orders was unusually large; twenty-six were elected to the office of Deacon, and twelve to that of Elder. Among the former we find the following from Virginia: Wm. H. Coman, Sussex; Anthony Payne, Suffolk; Wm. Elliot and John Moore, Greensville; Richard Reaves, Amelia; Wm. Pinnell, Cumberland; Jno. Richardson and Obadiah Thompson, Williamsburg; Richard Billups, Gloucester; John T. Nelson, Orange; John Harris, Hanover; Daniel Day and Benjamin Watts, Amherst; Enoch Sullivan, Richmond; Zach Hall, Manchester. Elders—John Lasley, Orange; John Brownly, Gloucester; Edward T. Rowzie, Hanover; John Shepherd and John A. Cocke, Amherst; Edward Dromgoole, Greensville; Abner Early, Bedford; Samuel K. Jennings, Lynchburg; Peter Robinson, Amelia; Thomas Payne and Thomas Sparks, Franklin. Two applications were rejected; one because the applicant was not, in the

judgment of the Conference, "sufficiently established in his opposition to slavery;" the other for a similar reason, and because he was "not sufficiently attentive in ruling and governing his family."

The deficiencies amounted to $1,390.67; collected from the circuits, $266.99; received from the Chartered Fund, $112; from the Book Concern, $250.

The membership was returned at 19,817 whites, and 6,334 colored; the increase was 660 whites, and 59 colored. There were 46 circuits reported; 74 preachers were stationed.

At this session a committee of five, viz: P. Bruce, J. Early, W. Jean, C. Calloway and C. H. Hines, "was appointed to take into consideration the subject of slavery and report thereon." They made the following report, which was adopted. 1. The preachers shall instruct the colored people in the principles and duties of religion. 2. To search out and pay particular attention to all the classes of colored people in the bounds of their stations and circuits. 3. If any member of the M. E. Church be found guilty of carrying on, directly or indirectly, the trade of slave speculation, he or she shall be expelled the Church."

The following law question was presented and decided: "Is it legal for a Presiding Elder, in any case, to call a committee to try a local preacher, and sit in the trial?" The President gave it as his opinion "that the Presiding Elder may do it, and it will be legal." An appeal was made from the President's opinion to the Conference, and after a lengthy discussion, the vote was taken, and the principle as stated was confirmed by the Conference.

The following record appears in the Minutes: "A Society, known by the name of the 'Benevolent Society,' submitted to the care of this Conference the sum of $140 for the aid of married preachers, &c., and the Conference voted to accept it." Query—was this the origin of the present Relief Society?

Jesse Brown had closed his labors during the year, and entered into rest. He was a native of Amherst County, had been only four years in the work, and closed his life on the Buckingham circuit. In the Minutes he is described as a man of piety and zeal, and while his strength lasted, abundant in labors. As life drew to a close his afflictions increased; but his joy and confidence also increased. He was a witness of the perfect love of God, and professed to retain its sanctifying influences as long as he lived. He continued to praise God while he had breath, and his brethren doubted not that his labors and sufferings ended together.

Among the names of those received on trial at this Conference, that of Lewis Skidmore is the most noted. Like many other distinguished leaders of Methodism, he rose from the humbler walks of life. Born and reared in Fairfax County, he came to Richmond when a young man, and labored at the trade of a blacksmith. He was, at this time, a zealous and diligent Christian, already exhibiting those peculiar traits so usefully unfolded in his subsequent career. Through the influence of Stith Mead, he was induced to offer himself as a candidate for admission into the itinerant ranks. From the time of his reception, he gave himself without reserve to the work of saving souls. He rose rapidly in the confidence of

his brethren, and was soon recognized as a leading spirit in the Conference. He became one of the great doctrinal preachers of Methodism. Perhaps no man was more eminently fitted by natural endowments for this peculiar work. His mind was clear, calm, and strong—order was its prevailing principle. His thoughts were arranged with the utmost precision, and when presented in his terse style, the sermon was like a well wrought chain Skilful in arraying his facts, and copious in forcible and familiar illustrations, he seldom failed to produce conviction in the minds of unprejudiced hearers. He possessed a degree of good nature that shone in all his discourses, and served to keep his most determined opponents on good terms with him, while they writhed under the sledge-hammer blows of his logic. When in company with them, the genial sunshine of his heart soon dispelled the clouds which had gathered during a three hours' discussion of some theological dogma.

In small matters, as in great, he was a man of order. He had "a place for every thing, and every thing in its place." In his clothing, equipage, language, even in his measured tread, this might be seen. In the darkest night, he never wanted a light to find any article that he had stowed away in his capacious saddle-bags. He was a great economist. It may be doubted whether he ever expended a dollar uselessly in his long life. He was especially useful in the circulation of religious books ; into every field of labor he carried the very best Methodist publications, and few families were left unsupplied with the ablest works issued by the Book Concern. He was as dili-

gent in business, as he was fervent in spirit, and abundant in labors.

In the days of his greatest efficiency as a preacher, he was noted for his sermons on Baptism. He seemed to feel that he had a special call to defend the views of his Church on this vexed question. And nobly did he perform the task. There was scarcely a circuit in the Conference where he had not, at a quarterly or Camp Meeting, held the people spell-bound by his able and luminous discussions of this subject. Confining himself on these occasions almost wholly to the teachings of the Scriptures, he reasoned thereupon with astonishing force and success. He thus planted the seeds of truth in the hearts of thousands, and confirmed many, who by specious, but hollow arguments, had been made to waver in their faith.

He was eminently fitted by nature for the toils and hardships of the itinerancy. In stature he was rather under the medium height, his frame was heavy and muscular, and in his later years inclined to corpulency. His complexion was quite dark, his brow high and full, his features well cut, his eyes black, with humor lurking in their quiet depths. His whole appearance was that of an earnest, practical, ready-witted, strong-minded man, intent upon the execution of a high and holy mission.

In the Conference, he spoke but seldom; but when he did, it was always to the purpose. He was a man of peace, and by some apt quotation from the Bible, or from the hymns of the Church, suddenly thrown into an exciting debate, he would check the rising passions, and enable reason to regain her sway. The

writer would recall an instance of this kind. The first session of the Virginia Conference he ever attended, was a stormy one; for many days debates had been going on of a most exciting nature; at length the discussion closed, and the question, seriously involving the character of a prominent minister, was about to be taken. Just at that moment of anxious suspense, this venerable man arose and said: "Mr. President." Instantly the attention of the whole body was fixed upon him; he then repeated slowly, in his peculiarly impressive manner, these lines:

> "Teach me to feel another's woe,
> To hide the faults I see;
> That mercy I to others show,
> That mercy show to me,"

and then quietly took his seat. The effect was manifest on the entire Conference; it was like oil poured upon the troubled waters. The decision was given, but most solemnly, under a deep sense of responsibility to Him who will mete out to us as we measure to our fellow men. Forty-four years the name of Lewis Skidmore stood on the rolls of the Conference. For more than half this period he filled consecutively the office of Presiding Elder, a sufficient proof of his eminent qualifications for this responsible position. In the history of the Conference no other man, we believe, ever filled the office so long, and presided over so large a portion of the Conference territory. Worn down at length by the toils of many years, and yielding to the demands of age, he retired from the active service of the church, to

pass the closing years of life amid the tranquil pleasures of his own homestead. Here he was not idle; the same practical good sense, and the same religious zeal, marked his course as a man of business and as a preacher. Not an idle Sabbath did he pass so long as he was able to reach an appointment. While he had strength to make the journey, he was always in his place at the meeting of the Virginia Conference, and when his growing infirmities prevented his attendance, a brief, pointed and affectionate letter, breathing the true spirit of the faithful minister and the humble, trustful Christian, was sure to find its way into the hands of the presiding Bishop. The announcement of "a letter from Brother Skidmore" was sure to command the attention of the Conference.

In 1857 this good man closed his long and useful life, and entered into rest. "The memory of the just is blessed."

During the session of the Conference, Asbury was so feeble as scarcely to be able to discharge his duties. On the previous Sabbath he "was two hours preaching, meeting the society, baptizing and ordaining," by which hard labor he "gained a fever and a clear conscience." In New Berne he was compelled to use crutches, so great was the swelling in his feet. But, no sooner was the Conference over than he pushed on towards Virginia. After a ride "of fifty miles" through "excessive cold," he writes: "I fly, and a strange flight it is for a sick cripple." After a terrible journey of four days he reached "Cox's, on James River." "Here," he says, "flesh failed, and

I wished for rest and found it." Another "heavy ride" brought him to "Mr. Blakey's happy family and pleasant mansion." On Sabbath he "preached in Richmond Old Chapel, gave counsel to the tarrying society, baptized two infants, and ordained John Sullivan and William Whitehead Deacons." He spoke again in the afternoon to a congregation made up of the young and the aged. He found the Presbyterians and Episcopalians striving to have places of worship. Leaving Richmond he directed his course towards Alexandria, taking the upper part of the Northern Neck in his route. On this journey, he says, "we became entangled in the woods, and had a gentle upset, which brought us, without much damage, to the bottom of the hill; a ride of two miles on horseback brought us and our baggage to our lodgings for the night. My mind enjoys great peace; but I am in pain of body, and my legs are swelled." Deeply affected at the moral condition of the county through which he was passing, he exclaims, "My mind mourns over the citizens of King George County. O for a Gospel day and work!"

It is impossible to follow this incomparable man, and mark his sufferings and labors in the cause of Christ, without having the deepest feelings of the heart aroused. In the day he is "plunging thirty miles through the clay" to a place of rest, and then, instead of retiring to his room, we find him toil-worn and feeble, "lecturing in the family." The next day he makes another exhausting ride, hastens to the Church, and speaks "long and plainly" to listening hundreds. Then, again, we find him in a friend's

house, "sitting on the carpet," because of his suffering, "reading, writing," and counselling his spiritual children; the next day he is off again on his errand of mercy, through the biting cold, and as he struggles on we hear him say: "I am feeble, and have to endure pain and cold, and perform double labor;" but then follows the excellent language of faith, "Blessed be God, for the support I receive!"—and again, as he enters some house of rest: "My body is feeble, but my mind is greatly in God." No labors, save those of Wesley in England, can compare with those of Asbury in America;—and, indeed, in long and dreary rides, in cheerless homes, in all the privations and discomforts attendant on itinerancy, in a new and sparsely settled country, the life of the great American leader much more abounded than did that of the founder of Methodism.

But few records remain of the progress of religion in the bounds of the Conference for this year. In some circuits, however, there were gracious revivals. On Amelia, under the preaching of Stith Mead, many souls were converted, some of whom remain to this day useful members of the militant Church. This work began at a "new meeting house called Piney Branch Chapel," and rapidly spread to other parts of the circuit. At a Camp Meeting held at Ford's, in Dinwiddie, seventy-seven were converted; at another held soon after at Rocky Oak, in Powhatan, twenty-six professed to find pardon. "On Sabbath, the 8th of August," says Mead, in his journal, "I preached at a new chapel called Cellar Creek, near Brother John Royal's, in Nottoway County, to a congregation

composed principally of the nobility, and I scarcely ever saw a greater display of Divine power among a people of that description; at a common appointment several of the first families in fortune and respectability have obtained religion and joined the Church. Capt. William Fitzgerald, Dr. Campbell, and many more of the same notoriety, have joined our Church in other parts of the circuit." Methodism has always maintained its position among the citizens of this county. In no part of Virginia has she been more cordially received and more fully sustained in all her doctrines and economy than by the people of Nottoway and the adjoining counties. In all that section of the Conference are still to be found within her pale, godly men and women, whose ancestors were enrolled in the army of the Lord by Williams, and Pillmoor, by Bruce, Lee, Asbury and McKendree.

The Conference of 1814 met at Norfolk on the 21st of February. Asbury and McKendree were present. Forty-two members attended. The sessions were held in the Masonic Hall. The business hours were from 8 A. M., to 11, and from 2, to 5 P. M. Fourteen were admitted on trial; six were elected to Deacon's and two to Elder's orders; two were reädmitted; eleven located; one was dropped, and one expelled; one had died; nine local preachers were elected Deacons, and two to the office of Elder. No report appears in the Minutes of deficiencies, nor of collections in the circuits; the Conference drew from the Chartered Fund $134, "as their division of the profits therefrom until the 30th of June." The dividend from the Book Concern was $250.

The white membership was reported at 19,827; the colored at 6,361; the increase was but 10 whites and 27 colored.

The number of circuits was reduced to 37 by uniting several in different parts of the work; 70 preachers received appointments.

"The Benevolent Society offered to the Conference $116 for the benefit of travelling married preachers, and it was accepted."

"A committee was appointed to consider and report upon a manuscript written by the Rev. W. S., denominated a 'Treatise on the Education of Children.'"

The committee settled the fate of the book by the following report: "The preamble is too elaborate and not very appropriate. 2. The subject matter is too fraught with self-commendation, apology for the author, &c. 3. The anecdote introduced in the sequel appears too eminently calculated to destroy the designed effects of the performance. 4. That the style is very exceptionable—many expressions being extremely harsh and vulgar. It is the opinion of your Committee, therefore, that it will not be beneficial to the Conference, and that it be returned to the author."

The reference of Asbury to this Conference shows that there were some unpleasant incidents connected with it, but what they were we have not been able fully to learn. "Our Conference," he writes, "rose on Tuesday, March 1st. We have been mighty in talk this session. I dare not speak my mind on the state of this place—its Church or its ministry. I endure

all things for the elect's sake; and rejoice that peace is again happily restored to the Society. Shall we not drop and locate more laborers than we receive? We had a great many sermons preached, as usual; and we have reason to hope souls were converted. I ordained Deacons, and assisted my brethren in the ministration of the word."

One of the difficulties at this session, as we have learned from a minister who was present, arose out of the subject of "dress." The preacher stationed in Norfolk had been very severe on the ladies for their indulgence in fine dressing, and made it the subject of comment in almost every sermon. The members became so much annoyed at his course that they at length petitioned the Presiding Elder to remove him; he was removed, and at the ensuing Conference brought charges against the Elder for his action in the case. In the investigation of the charges, a great deal was said as to the propriety of enforcing the Disciplinary rule on dress. In the heat of the discussion Asbury rose and said, that he had travelled more extensively than any preacher in the connection, and he could say, that with a few exceptions, the Methodist women were the plainest in the land. And as to the rule proscribing "high heads and enormous bonnets," he was sure that not one of the preachers had ever seen such things; nor the "ruffles and rings" alluded to by Wesley. He had seen ladies in England with every finger covered with rings, and their arms with ruffles of costly lace, from the shoulder below the finger ends. For his part, he said he would greatly prefer to see women dress even in this extrav-

agant manner, than to see a preacher walk into the Conference room with his fair top boots, and red morocco straps hanging down to his ankles, and a great gold watch chain and seal dangling from his fob. This gave a quietus to the debate, we may presume, and a keen rebuke to the wearers of fair top boots and gold watch chains.

The Conference had lost an excellent member in the death of Leroy Merritt. He was a native of Bedford County, and had been six years in the work. He possessed talents which "highly recommended him as a useful and acceptable preacher." His last station was Portsmouth, and on his return to it from a visit to his relatives he was seized with a fever. With great difficulty, he reached the house of a pious lady, and told her he had come there to die. His words were true. In a few days after, on the quiet Sabbath, "his happy soul took its exit in the triumph of faith, and fled, we do not hesitate to say, to an exalted seat in glory. His last words were, 'I have gained the victory!—come, Lord; come, Lord! I am ready to go!—glory, glory, glory!—roll on, eternity, eternity!—roll on, ages, ages, ages.'" The death of such a man is often as precious to the Church as his life.

Methodism was called this year to mourn the loss of one of her greatest lights. On the 3d of May, Thomas Coke died on his passage to India. This eminent man was every way worthy to be the associate of Wesley and Asbury. Forty years he was an active laborer in the great field of the world. For nearly thirty, he had charge of all the foreign missions of

Methodism, and by his unremitting toil and ceaseless activity, many thousands of souls, in the most unpromising fields, were brought to the knowledge of God. "Under his influence," said the British Conference in noticing his death, "missions were established in almost every English island in the West Indies. The flame of his missionary zeal burst forth on British America. Societies were also formed by him, or under his superintendence, in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the islands on the eastern coast of the American Continent, and subsequently in the Bahamas and Burmudâ; and to the coast of Africa also he directed his zealous efforts." In the prosecution of this noble work "he stooped to the very drudgery of charity, and gratuitously plead the cause of a perishing world from door to door." Eighteen times he crossed the Atlantic, besides many other shorter voyages; his land journeys were measured by thousands of miles. In our own land he proclaimed salvation from the centre to the utmost border of our settlements. "*In labors more abundant,*" is the fit motto of such a man. This is proved not less by his literary labors than by his vast travels and constant preaching. His Commentary on the Bible, extending through six large quarto volumes, would of itself be a sufficient proof of his industry, but to this he added a History of the West Indies, in three octavo volumes, besides a number of sermons, and controversial pamphlets, in defence of the doctrinal views of Methodism. Other valuable works he projected, such as the "History of the Bible," and the "Cottager's Bible," but they were not issued, except the last

named, of which a few numbers were published. These works were none the less valuable for being mostly compilations. Of his Commentary, he says, "he had only been like the bee, culling honey from every flower." It was held in high esteem by the English Conference, from whom he twice received a vote of thanks for its publication.

The following elegant, and impartial description of Coke, is from the pen of his biographer, Samuel Drew. "Dr. Coke was low in stature, and, as he advanced in age, was inclined to corpulency; but he was finely proportioned, and exhibited a pleasing figure. His skin was remarkably fair; his eyes were dark, lively, and piercing. His hair bordered on black, until his declining years, when it became sprinkled with the hoar of age. His face was particularly handsome. A peculiar freshness, through every stage of life, distinguished his countenance, which was generally animated with an engaging smile. These, in their combined effect, gave to the whole a degree of expressive softness, that refined the masculine features without reducing them to a state of effeminacy. His voice was soft, engaging and melodious; and unless carried beyond its natural tone, when it became rather harsh and dissonant, it rarely failed to captivate those who heard.

"The animation which beamed in his countenance was a striking index of his natural disposition. Warm, sanguine, and confident, he rarely hesitated in a state of indecision; and, having fixed his resolution, he was not to be deterred in the execution of his purposes by the apprehension of meeting a lion

in the way. His uncommon activity frequently led him to carry his schemes into effect before they were ripe for execution; and, as a natural consequence, the same sanguine disposition which induced a promptitude of action, exposed him to the charge of indiscretion.

"His understanding, though naturally good, was not to be ranked among the higher orders of human intellect. It was comprehensive, but not profound; and was better calculated to produce respect, than to excite amazement. Among common spirits, that take their stand in life near the mediocrity of human existence, it shone with a superlative degree of lustre.

"In early life his learning and literary acquirements were considerable; but the department in the Church which he was afterward called to fill, so far engrossed his time as to allow him no opportunity to make any proficiency in those recondite sciences which he ardently loved; he only attended to the cultivation of philology, criticism, oratory, logic, and metaphysics, so far as was necessary to qualify him for the circle in which it was his lot to move.

"As a preacher, his talents were always displayed to the greatest advantage when he applied himself to the hearts of his hearers; and at this point he seemed invariably to aim. The divinity of Christ, and the direct witness of the Spirit, were topics on which he delighted to dwell. On these he enlarged in strains of the most affecting animation, and in a style that, being at once declamatory, nervous, impressive and familiar, was calculated to awaken the attention and affect the heart.

"Into a detail of argument he seldom entered, but he supplied the deficiency by a copious appeal which he generally made to Scripture authority, with which his mind was abundantly stored. Being a full believer in the divinity of Christ, he waged perpetual war against Arianism and Socianism; and in the warmth of his zeal, his language on these occasions was sometimes harsh and unguarded, and better calculated to irritate than to convict. On the fashionable vices which prevailed, his expressions were also occasionally quaint and offensive; and his comparisons and illustrations not always selected with sufficient care. But even with these blemishes in his public discourses, he was generally popular; and he rarely failed to collect crowded audiences among the fashionable and gay, on whom his strictures fell with the greatest degree of severity.

"His manners were highly polished and his address in private life was peculiarly polite and obliging. He was cheerful, animated and free, and rarely failed to be communicative, unless he suspected that he was assailed with questions from improper motives. His incessant travels, his acquaintance with the world, and his knowledge of human character, furnished him with an ample store of anecdotes, which enlivened conversation, while they captivated, amused and instructed his company.

"In Conference, he was eloquent, commanding, polite, easy, comprehensive, and energetic. But he had been so long accustomed to opposition, that perseverance became necessary for him to carry his purposes into effect; and in most instances it never forsook

him until his efforts were crowned with success. On these, and on many other occasions, he has been accused of giving way to a spirit of irritation, but this charge is only true under certain restrictions. And when convinced of his error, he was more ready to make an acknowledgment, and to beg pardon for his deviation from the rigid rules of decorum than he had been to furnish an occasion for either. The peculiar grace with which this was done rarely failed to procure for him the veneration and esteem of those whom he had opposed. If from the aggregate amount of excellencies in his character we subtract his irritability, his profusion of money, his improvidence, his precipitancy, and his occasionally severe expressions in the pulpit, nothing of magnitude will remain which his scrutinizing survivors would not be proud to own."

Asbury, who knew him long and intimately, pays the following eloquent tribute to his memory. "Coke, the gentleman, the Christian, the scholar, the writer, the superintendent, the preacher, the missionary, is no more; all immortal, all divine! Take him in every direction, the greatest man of all the Oxonian Methodists. I suppose sixteen times he crossed the Atlantic; the seventeenth to Bombay on the grand Asain mission. In going to Ceylon he died. Possibly, for thirty-five years the true slave of the Methodist Church. He spent his own, and his wife's fortune, and his life, in the missionary work. He begged thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, for the work of God." "O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thy high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jona-

than; very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women."

The last great work of Coke was the projection of the mission to India. For many years his eye had been turned towards that grand and inviting field, but it was not until he had placed the missionary work in other quarters upon a firm basis, that he felt himself free to penetrate those vast regions of Paganism. With his accustomed zeal he prepared for the arduous task. In his sixty-seventh year, he writes: "I am learning the Portuguese language continually, and am perfectly certain I shall conquer it before I land in Ceylon." At the Conference he presented eight men who were willing to join him in the hazardous enterprise. He silenced all opposition on the score of expense by offering to furnish, out of his private fortune, six thousands pounds, if so much should be needed. The Conference approved the measure, borrowed of him three thousand pounds, and sent him forth on his glad errand. He sailed with his companions on the 1st of January, 1814, and on the morning of the 3rd of May, in the middle of the Indian Ocean, his servant, on opening the door of his state-room, found all that was mortal of Thomas Coke, cold, stiff, and lifeless, stretched upon the cabin floor. His body was buried in the sea, to appear no more 'till the "trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible." Then shall Coke come forth, "a diamond of the purest water," to blaze in the crown of Him who liveth and reigneth forever.

On the 20th of February, Asbury, "in great weariness," opened the Virginia Conference at Lynch-

burg. He was assisted by his faithful co-laborer, McKendree. The veteran leader "preached on Sunday in the new, neat, brick chapel, forty feet by fifty." He essayed to do so again, but it was beyond his strength. "I failed," he says,—"I have been almost strangled with an asthmatic cough, and vomiting of blood." He was compelled to "keep the house and busy himself to organize the stations," while McKendree presided in the Conference. His heart rejoiced to learn that a treaty of peace had been made, and that the gospel would no longer be restrained by the violence of war.

At this session, eleven were received on trial; one was reädmitted; ten travelling, and thirteen local preachers elected Deacons; six of the former and seven of the latter elected Elders; eleven located; four probationers were dropped; none had died. The collections amounted to $215.53; received from the Chartered Fund, $140; from the Book Concern, $200. The amount of deficiencies is not stated. "We settled," says Asbury, "at seventy-one dollars each man." The returns showed a heavy loss in members. The whites were reported at 18,682; the colored at 5,017; the decrease was 1,145 whites, and 1,344 colored. In view of this loss Asbury asked: "Is there not a declination in gifts as well as in members?" The number of appointments was 41, supplied by 67 preachers.

The Conference, as we have already seen, was very strict in passing the characters of the travelling preachers, and in the examination of local preachers applying for ordination. Several were dropped at

this session for deficiency in talents; others for remissness and inattention to their duties, were admonished, if present, by the Bishop before the Conference; if absent, they were admonished by letter. A number of local preachers were refused ordination because, in the judgment of the Conference, they were "deficient in point of talents." The Conference was also quite strict in reference to the publication of books or pamphlets, by the members, without the consent of the body. Two of the oldest and most useful preachers were rebuked for so doing under a resolution "that it was improper." In reference to one of these, they went so far as actually to resolve "not to employ him unless he promised not to publish any more books or pamphlets without the consent of the Conference." He gave "satisfactory assurances that he would publish no more books between that time and the next General Conference."

The session of 1816 was held at Raleigh, North Carolina, in the month of February. Bishop McKendree presided. Nothing is said of Asbury in the Minutes; if present, he was too feeble to take any part in the business of the Conference. Thirty-nine members were in attendance; twelve were admitted on trial; one reädmitted; four probationers were dropped; four located; nine travelling, and seventeen local preachers, were ordained Deacons; four travelling, and two local Deacons, were raised to Elder's orders; one had died. No reports of moneys received from any quarter appear on the Journal. The membership was reported at 18,732 whites, and 5,621 blacks; there was a gain of more than 600 colored,

but only 50 white members; forty circuits were reported, and sixty-six preachers were stationed.

The following delegates to the General Conference were elected: P. Bruce, W. Jean, Thos. Burge, E. Cannon, Thomas Moore, C. H. Hines, E. Drake, J. C. Ballew, M. M. Dance and Minton Thrift.

"A memorial was presented and read to Conference from certain persons in Lynchburg, members of the M. E. Church, praying that some regulations may be made respecting slavery; and for this purpose a committee of the following persons was appointed, and directed to report at the next Annual Conference, viz: P. Bruce, Thomas Burge, E. Drake, E. Cannon and C. H. Hines."

Ewen Johnson had left the field of toil for the rest of heaven. He was a native of Caswell county, North Carolina. Eight years he had toiled in the ministry. He was "of an humble and timid spirit," but "persevering and faithful;" had "wholly given himself up to the work of the ministry, and sought to glorify God in the reformation and salvation of men." Suffering great bodily affliction, he lost the power of speech shortly before his death, but his mind was clear and calm. "The day before his decease, he arose, fell on his knees, clapped his hands together, and appeared to be filled with the Divine presence. Thus departed that servant of the Lord to receive his reward, a crown that fadeth not away."

A little more than a month after the close of this Conference, the American Methodist Church was called to mourn the death of Francis Asbury. On

the 31st of March, like a shock of corn fully ripe, he was gathered into the heavenly garner. This sad event was not unexpected. In his annual visitations to the Conferences and Churches during the last decade of his life, "in age and feebleness extreme," he discharged the duties of his high office. And as his venerable form disappeared from the log chapel, the Conference room of the village, or the city, his spiritual children gazed after him with sad hearts and tearful eyes, sorrowing that soon they should see his face no more. His last year was as full of toil as any of the forty-five he had spent in planting Methodism in the New World. With an incurable disease, rapidly running into consumption, preying day and night on his feeble and tottering frame, he went from South Carolina as far north as New Hampshire, and from Delaware as far west as Ohio. In August he writes at Zanesville: "Since the 20th of June we have passed through New Hampshire, Vermont, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Ohio, to Muskingum River, making nine hundred miles; two hundred of which ought, in our opinion, to be called the worst on the continent." In this vast circuit he omitted none of his usual labors, except when his strength utterly failed him. He presided in the Conferences, made out the stations, preached at Camp and Quarterly meetings, wrote letters to all parts of the work, ordained travelling and local preachers as they met him at certain points in his journey, "visited from house to house with his mite subscription," begging money for the support of his preachers, and, as a "member of the Bible Society in Philadelphia, distributing many

hundreds of Testaments." In the midst of all these labors, which a man in full health and vigor might have shrunk from, he was a worn and wasted old man, now lying in bed and "coughing the whole night;" and anon enduring the torture of four blisters, "applied for a great inflammation in his face and jaws." He says of himself as his career drew towards its brilliant close: "I die daily—am made perfect by labor and suffering, and fill up still what is behind." But he is fully bent on his mission; his bodily infirmities demand that he shall pause and by the aid of medicines alleviate his pains, but he exclaims, "There is no time or opportunity to take medicine in the daytime, I must do it at night." And thus he worked while it was day, although he felt himself "wasting away with a constant dysentery and cough." Noble and sublime example of Christian heroism!

In this last journey his mind seemed gifted with prophetic knowledge. He and McKendree had a long and earnest talk "about the affairs of the Church and his future prospects." Asbury told him that the western part of the empire would be the glory of America for the poor and pious; that it ought to be marked out for five Conferences, to wit: Ohio, Kentucky, Holston, Mississippi and Missouri, and he traced out the lines and boundaries of this inviting field. He told his colleague that as he had passed the allotted period of human life and was out of health, it could not be expected that he should visit the extremities of the vast territory every year, preside in from eight to twelve Conferences, and travel six thousand miles in eight months. But still in his decline

he hoped to be able to preside in every other Conference along his route; and, "as to the stations," he says, "I should never exhibit a plan unfinished, but still, get all the information in my power so as to enable me to make it perfect, like the painter who touches and retouches until all parts of the picture are pleasing."

Thus full of labors and sufferings, and full of plans for the Church he loved so well, the venerable man having wintered in the South, which he had "visited thirty times in thirty-one years," and where he "usually gained health," turned his face towards the North. He had made his last visit to the genial, sunny clime. He flattered himself with the hope of reaching Baltimore, the seat of the General Conference. But God had ordered otherwise. His disease progressed so rapidly as to defy the power of medicine, and the remaining strength of a constitution already shattered by repeated attacks of sickness, and worn down by excessive toil, was almost spent. But his great soul bore up under all, and seemed to defy the power of the destroyer.

By slow stages he continued to travel from the South, carefully attended by his devoted travelling companion, Rev. John W. Bond. About the middle of March he reached Manchester, and put up with his old friend, John Potts. He was extremely feeble and his journey had been made with much suffering.

We are indebted to Rev. Philip Courtney for interesting reminiscences of this last visit of Asbury to Richmond. Soon after his arrival at Manchester, Father Courtney went over to preach on the Sabbath.

He of course called to see the Bishop, and found him in a very feeble condition. Asbury requested him to remain with him, and sent Mr. Bond to preach in his stead. During their conversation, Asbury broached a plan for bringing the local preachers more actively into the itinerant work. The plan was this: The local preachers living in a city, as in Richmond, for example, should procure a horse, and each, in succession, travel a round on the circuit. There were six local preachers at that time in Richmond, thus each would twice a year make the round of the circuit. At the close of the year, they were to select one of their number to attend the Annual Conference; or in case of a failure to select, then the preacher who made the last round was to attend as their representative. We have no information as to whether the plan was practised extensively, if at all.

Asbury, after remaining a few days in Manchester to recruit his exhausted strength, came over to Richmond and lodged with Rev. Archibald Foster, who lived on Main street, a little above the Market bridge, in the house now occupied as a seed store by Mr. Palmer. Here he remained for a week confined to his room. It was during this time that he had an interesting interview with Bishop Moore, of the Protestant Episcopal Church. It seems that a man who had been a Wesleyan preacher in England, and afterwards in this country, had come from the South seeking admission into the P. E. Church. Asbury, ever watchful over the interests of Christ's kingdom in all its branches, heard of his intention, and determined to put Bishop Moore on his guard against this

unworthy applicant. He therefore sent for him and warned him not to lay hands on the head of this person; he had known him in England and this country, and he knew him to be a troublesome and bad man. He then said in substance: "Bishop Moore, in passing through your Diocese you will find but few Episcopal churches, and these in a sad state of decay, with but few communicants; but in almost every neighborhood you will find an unpretending little clap-board meeting house. In these, an humble, pious people assemble to worship God in spirit and in truth. Go into these houses and preach to the people that gather in them. Recognise them as the children of God, and as true Christians, and you will greatly promote the cause of Christ." This scene was one of thrilling interest. Bishop Moore was deeply impressed by the manner and tone of Asbury. Both were representative men; both filled the same high office, and were greatly beloved by their respective churches. The one, full of strength and zeal, had, but a few years before, begun the cultivation of his portion of the Lord's vineyard; the other, feeble and failing, but full of faith and peace, looked over a prospect spreading far on every side, in which he beheld thousands of branches of the True Vine, planted by his own hand, flourishing in strength and beauty, and yielding the fruits of holiness;—these he commended to the care and culture of his younger and stronger brother, as he leaned upon his staff in the late evening of a well spent life. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

A few days after this interview, Asbury delivered his last public testimony. His friends, fearing he might die in the effort to preach, endeavored to dissuade him from the task. But he resisted them, saying that he must once more deliver the gospel message in Richmond. He was taken to the door of the old Church, at the corner of 19th and Franklin streets, in a carriage, and thence borne in a chair to the pulpit and seated on a table. Nearly an hour he spoke with much fervor and affection from the words: "For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth." Romans ix. 28. The sermon was delivered with much difficulty; at brief intervals he paused to recover breath; it was like the last words of a dying father to his children. The hearers were deeply, powerfully affected. "How could it be otherwise?" asks one in describing the scene. "To behold a venerable old man, under the dignified character of an ecclesiastical patriarch, whose silver locks indicated that time had already numbered his years, and whose pallid countenance and trembling limbs presaged that his earthly race was nearly finished: to see in the midst of these melancholy signals of decaying nature a soul beaming with immortality, and a heart kindled with divine fire from the altar of God—to see such a man, and to hear him address them in the name of the Lord of Hosts, on the grand concerns of time and eternity! What heart so insensible as to withstand the impressions that such a scene was calculated to produce?"

This sermon was preached at 3 o'clock Sunday

afternoon, March 24th. Exhausted almost to fainting by the effort, he was borne to his carriage, and taken to his lodgings. On Monday he rested. Tuesday he set out, hoping to be able to reach Baltimore by easy stages; the next day he found it necessary to rest. On Thursday he started again, and the day after reached the house of his old friend, George Arnold, of Spottsylvania. He had hoped to reach Fredericksburg, twenty miles beyond, but the severity of the weather and his failing strength prevented. On Friday evening he grew worse; the night was one of much suffering. The next morning the family proposed to send for a physician, but he objected, saying that his breath would be gone before the doctor could get there. All day and night he suffered greatly, and it was evident that his end was drawing near. He said he had no special communication to make to the Church, having fully expressed his mind in his addresses to Bishop McKendree and the General Conference. "On Sunday, at 11 o'clock, he inquired if it was not time for meeting; but recovering his recollection, he desired that the family might be called together. Brother Bond sung, prayed, and expounded the twenty-first chapter of Revelation. Throughout the exercises he appeared to be collected and much engaged in devotion. They offered him a little barley water, but he was unable to swallow, and his speech began to fail. Observing the agony of Brother Bond's distress, he raised his hand, and looked joyfully at him. Brother Bond then asked him if he felt the Lord Jesus Christ to be precious? He seemed to exert all his remaining strength, and raised

both his hands as a token of triumph ; and in a few minutes after, as he sat in his chair with his head supported by Brother Bond's hand, without a struggle, he breathed his last on Sunday, the 31st of March, 1816.

Thus died Francis Asbury, "after having devoted to the work of the ministry fifty-five years, forty-five of which were spent in visiting the cities, villages, and wildernesses of North America ; during thirty of these, he filled the highly responsible office, and conscientiously discharged the arduous duties of General Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

In their obituary notice of their father and leader, his sons in the ministry well said: "When we count the thousands throughout this vastly extensive continent, who, with affectionate veneration, owned him as their spiritual father, we may question if a weightier charge has been committed to any man since the days of the Apostles ; and when the records of his life shall meet the public eye, who, that patiently examines and candidly decides, will be bold enough to say that since that time duties so great and so various have been by one man more faithfully performed ?" The unfoldings of his life have long since confirmed this opinion of his co-laborers. During the period of his ministry he preached not less than eighteen thousand sermons, presided in more than two hundred Annual Conferences, stationed thousands of preachers, ordained more men to the ministry than any other man ever did, and travelled two hundred thousand miles. When nearly seventy years of age, he writes to a friend : "I purpose six thousand miles a year, if God

will help me; meet nine Conferences, and write a letter for every day in the year. If possible, let us preach as we have never preached before. Let us fight the good fight of faith."

The letters of Asbury by which he encouraged and stimulated his sons in the Gospel, and infused into them his own pure and triumphant faith, form the most interesting portion of his literary remains. They show the heart of this incomparable man beyond anything we find in his published works. He speaks in them, without reserve to his beloved children, of his sufferings, trials, and triumphs; of his deep sorrow when Zion languishes, of his heartfelt rejoicings when she moves on her path of light, "clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners." In 1814, in the midst of the desolations of war, he writes: "My son, Great, great grace attend us in these evil, evil days. O may churches, pastors, people, escape the dreadful slumber, and be all awake. No more the glorious increase of 8, 10, 18, or 20,000 added to the Church, through wasting sickness, and the thousands called to expeditions. The never to be forgotten Otterbine said to me, many years ago, that war was the greatest judgment of God, and unproductive of any good, because we would always be looking at men, means, and measures, and naturally forget God." Again, speaking of his sufferings and hopes, he says: "Bishop McKendree and myself parted, some thought never to meet in time. Six weeks' confinement, almost given up by my doctors and friends; if the gates of death were near, they were gates of glory to me.

Reduced beyond measure, total loss of appetite, sixteen times bled, three times blistered; heaven, glory, all in sight; the work of God plain; to view the rectitude of my intentions in all my labors—my martyr's life, and readiness for a martyr's death. * * * I am now a walking skeleton. I go on in the way of duty; the greatest soul to preach and do duty, but bodily and mental powers weak. O brother, attend to all parts of your important duty in health. Next to the atonement and assurance of the justifying and sanctifying, practical righteousness of Christ, it comforts me that I began so soon and made such haste—and to think on the souls sent to glory! O if the Methodists will walk by the same rules, in forty years more British and Spanish America will be peopled with the gospel and saints, if it is six or ten thousand miles in length. O the Bible Societies in England and America, spreading truth all over the world! O Africa! O Asia! the Isles of the sea! Come home the seed of Abraham!" Referring to the means of support for himself and McKendree, he says: "Bishop McKendree's horse and money fails, and eight hundred miles to New England. His benevolence would not let him take his dividend. Possibly we receive this year $140. I ride in style, [ironically,] but what is to support me? A horse, five dollars in change; $20 from Philadelphia to Pittsburg, from June 16th to July 23rd—still onward we go, in the strength of our God, in the line of duty. My love to all the fathers and mothers in Israel, brethren and sisters. Tell them, pray on, pray on, watch on,

fight, wrestle on. I remember the little children. God be gracious to us all."

Such were the letters by which he moved preachers and people to follow him as he followed Christ.

As he failed in strength, he grew more earnest and eloquent in his appeals to the preachers. To one he writes: "O the grace we need! And what a fulness we want; meekness more than Moses—courage like Joshua—faith like Abraham—a spirit of prayer like Jacob—zeal like Paul—O grace, O grace!" To another: "May the great Head of the Church prepare us all to preach all the gospel doctrines in their order; to saints, sinners, backsliders, legalists, deists, and hypocrites. Alas! what little have I done, what little have I suffered! Me, who am less than the least of all saints, not worthy to be called a preacher, much less a Bishop, and an apostolic successor. I want to live to make the best of a poor day's work. The longer I run, now forty years, the the further I am behind. Never had we such scaffolding for the work of God; far beyond all former appearances or calculations. But above all, Oh the souls already gone to glory!" To a third: "Oh! my brother, let us make haste as men of one business; let us make the best of time; it is short; because iniquity will abound, the love of many people, and preachers, is waxing cold, and we should be warmer than ever we were in the work of God. How shall we be wise like the serpent and harmless like the dove?"

The allusions of Asbury to his long and perilous journeys are never made in a complaining spirit, but

like a true veteran of the Cross, he calmly surveys the field of strife, and joyfully looks forward to his rest and his crown. "Serious times with me," he writes; "an old soldier of Jesus, I handle my crutch and say how fields have been won. In the 68th year of my age, 52nd of my ministry, and 42nd of my American Mission, I have lived to see above 200,000 in Methodist fellowship, 3,000 local laborers, and 700 travelling laborers. I have lived to see the French, the Revolutionary and the present war; [1812,] but may all our Church and National afflictions be sanctified to all when they come to press on rich and poor; patience, faith, prudence, love, diligence, long-suffering, gentleness, guide us." Again: "Kempis says, 'they that travel much are rarely sanctified.' O, my brother, to converse with all sorts of spirits and tempers, all characters, all opinions, in all companies. We have boarded two days, and bedded one night in taverns—all board, all tables, all families—such a life is ours; two old men, unknown, padding along. Hail the West and South! they are cold or hot; a people I know and can trust; but the mercies of my God sweeten every toil and make every region pleasing." In the same strain he writes: "My earthly house totters and shakes under the weight of 67 years of travel and labor, so that I can do but little, but our gracious God whom we serve can do what he pleaseth; a little while and heaven will crown our best wishes. I hope we shall join to sing redeeming love in yon bright world."

The great heart of Asbury embraced all mankind in its sanctified affection. In one of his letters he

says: "I never knew how to love the Canadians till I visited them at the hazard of my life, and the loss of the use of my limbs and health; and never knew how well I loved my children in the States, till separated by the St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario."

His letters to his personal friends among the laity breathe the true spirit of a Christian Bishop. To one of the Elect Ladies of Methodism, Mrs. Mary Mason Tabb, of Gloucester, Virginia, he writes: "My dear sister, are you heaven born and heaven bound? Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God, and Jesus our Lord. My female correspondents are few, except a few of the preacher's wives that write to me in the same letter with their husbands. I have once in a while to address a letter to a poor widow in distress, and once in a while to her sister, formed of the same clay and redeemed by the same blood, a daughter of the same God; but the Lady sister holds her servants, rides in her coach, possesses her thousands. You have your cares, and fears, and prayers, about those around you, and nearly connected by conjugal and tender ties. Only look well to your own ways. Your table may be sumptuously spread every day, but *you* need not fare so. Mr. Wesley observed that it was brought against the Rich Man as a charge, and adds, that no man can be a Christian and fare richly every day. You can be clear of the great transgression. You have not family prayers and religious exercises as you wish, yet you can retire often, and pray always; you cannot hear as many sermons, but you can read Mr. Wesley's at any time, and other good books; you can [cannot?]

give and do good as you wish, but your heart is given up to God in love and charity. God has been gracious to me when travelling, preaching and going on my hands and knees, and crutches, with a regular fit of rheumatism and inflammation in my breast—passing the Lakes in great pain, patience and power. The continent is waked with the power of God, and persecution follows; the more the world hates us, God will love us."

His friendships were strong and pure. On returning, in his vast circuit of five thousand miles a year, he often found that some cherished friend had been called to rest. It was his invariable rule, on such occasions, to visit the grave of the departed and there meditate and pray. A touching scene of this kind is given by Rev. Thomas Ware. "Soon after the death of General William Bryan, of Craven county, North Carolina, Bishop Asbury came to his house and was greatly afflicted to find the General gone. He walked the floor in sadness. He called me to walk out with him. 'Show me,' said he, 'his grave.' As we returned he said, 'Thomas, you have often heard me say I was almost a stranger to the luxury of tears, but they have come to me to-day, and I am greatly relieved.' On our return to the house he called the bereft family to prayers, after which he sat down to eat bread with them and to discourse on the sublimity of the spirit world. 'This,' he said, 'we were prone to put at a vast distance from us. Hence our predilection for the tomb. But do we not err in this? If our eyes were opened as the eyes of the servant of Elisha, would we not see hosts of beau-

teous forms, and among them him who used to fill the seat now occupied by me? And should he address us, would he not ask, 'What manner of communications are these ye make one to another, as ye sup together, and are sad?' Forget not how joyfully I took my leave, assured of my reception into the everlasting habitations. Think not of my tomb, but of my interest in the 'house not made with hands.'"

While he discoursed, I saw the countenance of our widowed sister lighted up with a smile, and with tears she said: "Brother Asbury, henceforth when I visit his tomb, I will no longer view it as situated in the region and shadow of death, but in the suburbs of those everlasting habitations into which my happy William, my sainted husband, has been received; and shall I grieve, since he is happy?"

Invited to pass the night near the spot where one of his friends was buried, he says: "Within sight of this beautiful mansion lies the precious dust of Mary Tiffin. It was as much as I could do to forbear weeping over her speaking grave. How mutely eloquent! Ah, the world knows little of my sorrows—little knows how dear to me are my many friends, and how deeply I feel their loss."

Of his faithful friend and co-laborer, Henry Willis, he writes: "A tiresome ride brought us to our home at the widow Willis'. From the door, I saw the tomb of dear Henry Willis. Rest, man of God! Thy quiet dust is not called to the labor of riding five thousand miles in eight months, to meet ten Conferences in a line of sessions from the District of Maine to the banks of the Cayuga—to the States of

Ohio, of Tennessee, of Mississippi—to Cape Fear, James River, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and to the completion of the round. Thou wilt not plan and labor the arrangement of the stations of seven hundred preachers; thou wilt not attend Camp meetings, and take a daily part in the general ministration of the word; and often consume the hours which ought to be devoted to sleep in writing letters upon letters. Lord, be with us, and help us to fulfil the task thou hast given us to perform."

Having preached in the neighborhood whence that eminent physician and devoted saint, Dr. Hinde, went to his rest, he says: "Once more I see Dr. Hinde from the other side of the flood, rejoicing in Jesus; he will never again, I presume, put a blister on his wife's head to draw Methodism out of her heart; this mad prank brought deep conviction, by the operation of the spirit of God, upon his soul. His children, some of them, already rejoice with him, having the same joy, faith, and hope."

The filial affection of Asbury is a beautiful trait in his character. As long as his parents lived, he regularly sent them a remittance from his scanty means. On making one of these annual offerings, he says: "Were it ten thousand per year, if I had it in my possession, you should be welcome, if you had need of it." On hearing of the extreme illness of his father, he wrote to his mother: "From the information I have received, I fear my venerable father is no more an inhabitant of this earth. You are a widow and I am an orphan, with respect to my father. I cannot tell how to advise you in this important change.

You have made yourself respectable and extensive friends, who, though they cannot give to you, can comfort you. I have been, as you have heard, afflicted by excessive labors of mind and body. I had to neglect writing, reading, and preaching for a time. I had to stop and lie by in some precious families, where parents and children, in some measure, supplied your absence. I lay by in Virginia. 'When you hear the name, you will love it unseen, for you will say, that is the place where my Frank was sick.' I am now much mended. I move in a little carriage, being unable to ride on horseback. Were you to see me, and the color of my hair—nearly that of your own! My eyes are weak even with glasses. When I was a child, and would pry into the Bible by twinkling firelight, you used to say, 'Frank, you will spoil your eyes.' It is a grief to me that I cannot preach as heretofore. I am greatly worn out at fifty-five; but it is a good cause. God is with me; my soul exults in God."

On receiving the sad news of his mother's death he inserts in his Journal the following tribute to her memory: "For fifty years her hands, her house, her heart, were open to receive the people of God and the ministers of Christ; and thus a lamp was lighted up in a dark place, called Great Barre in Great Britain. She was an afflicted, yet most active woman; of quick bodily powers, and masculine understanding; nevertheless, 'so kindly all the elements were mixed in her,' that her strong mind quickly felt the subduing influences of that Christian sympathy which 'weeps with those who weep,' and 'rejoices with those

who do rejoice.' As a woman and a wife, she was chaste, modest, blameless; as a mother, (above all the women in the world would, I claim her for my own), ardently affectionate; as a 'mother in Israel, few of her sex have done more by a holy walk to live, and by personal labor to support the gospel, and wash the saints feet; as a friend, she was generous, true, and constant.

"Elizabeth Asbury died January 6th, 1802, aged eighty-seven or eighty-eight years. There is now, after fifty years, a chapel within two or three hundred yards of her dwelling. I am now drawn out in thankfulness to God, who has saved a mother of mine, and, I trust, a father also, who are now already in glory, where I hope to meet them both, after time, and care, and sorrow shall have ceased with me; and where glory shall not only beam, but open on my soul forever."

It would be a pleasing task to record the passage of such a man, through a serene old age, to the land and companionship of the saints, without a cloud over his pathway, or a sorrow in his heart. In his personal experience as a Christian, he did pass downward to the tomb peaceful, hopeful, happy; but as a high officer of the Church of God, he was disturbed and distressed by a threatened innovation upon the economy of his beloved Methodism.

We have already alluded to his uneasiness at the agitation of the "Presiding Elder question." From the General Conference of 1812, to the time of his death, he feared and freely spoke of this dangerous movement, which culminated

in the rupture of 1828. To an intimate friend, he writes: "God hath founded Zion that the poor of his people may trust in her. While I admire the overruling hand of God in our General Conference, I have seen deep designed policy, which I shall set myself to oppose. I do not wish a plan, in a great degree formed and executed by myself for God, the purest system, and the purest administration (perhaps,) at this time on the face of the earth, altered or destroyed. We stand on Jesus, and in the rectitude of our hearts and indefatigable labors. God be merciful to us as sinners saved." Referring to a Conference which he had attended, he says: "The Conference went into electioneering, to me the most detestable thing in the Church." This was done, said one, to leave out the favorites of the Bishops. "Why," he asks, "should not the elections be as pure as the gospel we preach? Why not equal each District, a Presiding Elder and an Elder? from the cities *one*, not *three* members? O Rome! O Constantinople! City Elders wish to be free, no Bishop, but nominal; no Presiding Elders to oversee. * * * You Presiding Elders are set for justice, for order, for liberty—watch for God—the preachers will watch you. Four years hence, what? Where may I be? On earth, in Europe, in Heaven! I trust the temple will be built though in troublous times."

He trembled for the ark of Methodism, and bending under the weight of years and the care of all the churches, he faithfully warned his sons in the gospel to keep all its precious things bright and unbroken amid the conflict of opinions.

In every aspect of his character, Asbury seemed to have been selected by Providence as a leader among men. Without those educational advantages, supposed by some to be absolutely necessary to raise a man to the foremost place, he yet possessed a natural vigor of mind, a power of reading human nature, a clearness of judgment, and a force of will, which marked him out as one born to command; and all these endowments, harmonized and controlled by the most profound religious convictions, and ever acting in the light of faith, formed the basis of a character as pure and as noble as the Church of God has been blessed with since the close of the Apostolic age.

Measured by the schools, he would not be a called a learned man; but he had precisely that kind of learning adapted to the sphere in which God placed him. He read the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures daily, if not with the critical skill of a Wesley or a Clarke, yet with a lively appreciation of the force and beauty of the original text. He was also acquainted with the Latin, and to his linguistic studies be added a thorough course of reading in Theology, Church History, and Polity, Civil History and General Literature. He notes more than a hundred different works which he had read, and the notices in his Journal show that he was no superficial reader or thinker. His criticisms are always short, pointed and just; and we have thought that if he had taken time, he might have given reviews that would have done no discredit to Sydney Smith's select circle.

After reading Blair's sermons, he says: "I find some very beautiful things in these sermons; they

contain good moral philosophy. His sermon on Gentleness is worthy the taste of Queen Charlotte, and if money were anything toward paying for knowledge, I should think that sermon worth two hundred pounds sterling, which, some say, the Queen gave him."

Saurin's sermons: "Long, elaborate, learned, doctrinal, practical, historical, and explanatory." Of Thomson's Seasons he says: "I find a little wheat and a great deal of chaff. I have read great authors, so called, and wondered where they found their finery of words and phrases. Much of this might be pilfered from the 'Seasons' without real injury to the merit of the work; and doubtless it has been plucked by literary robbers."

We may well wonder that he could accomplish so much in the acquisition of knowledge in the midst of his great and incessant labors. The secret of his success was in his rigid adherence to a systematic method. It is said that when not travelling, his custom was to rise at four o'clock every morning; two hours were spent in prayer and meditation, two in reading and study, one in recreation and conversation. Ten, out of sixteen hours, were spent in reading the Hebrew Bible and other books, and in writing. When not at meeting or in the stationing room, he retired to his apartment at eight o'clock, and gave an hour to meditation and prayer before going to rest. Such a course, pursued for half a century, made him a wise and learned man in the highest sense. And in addition to all this, he acquired large stores of the best practical knowledge in his constant travels, and his free

intercourse with all classes of people. Like all the earlier preachers, he had gathered a vast number of anecdotes, with which, on proper occasions, he enlivened conversation.

In his judgment of men, and of their adaptation to the diversified work of Methodism, Asbury has never been excelled.

"He was admirably qualified," says one who knew him well, "for the duties of the stationing room. When the Conference of preachers would justify it, his discriminating judgment was peculiarly manifested in sending to a circuit two of different talents, calculated to be useful to different temperaments and dispositions. A son of thunder and a son of consolation were not unfrequently yoked together. Pursuing this course, he gave a powerful and perhaps lasting impulse to Methodism." One thing, among many others, he felt was essential to the success of the itinerant plan, and that he kept steadily in view—"a *circulation* of preachers to avoid partiality and popularity." At one of the Western Conferences two young men came up for admission on trial. They were recommended as "very learned young men;" one was the son of a distinguished teacher, the other the son of a distinguished general. Asbury had noticed their manner and conversation previous to the presentation. When the Presiding Elder announced their names, he gave them the highest praise, and declared they would be a great acquisition to the ministry and the Church. They were admitted with great unanimity. During this time Asbury sat with his eyes nearly closed. When the vote was

taken he seemed to wake up. "Yes, yes!" he exclaimed, "in all probability they both will disgrace you and themselves before the year is out."

And so it turned out. "In six months one was riding the circuit with a loaded pistol and a dirk, threatening to shoot and stab the rowdies; the other was guilty of a misdemeanor, and in less than nine months they were both out of the Church."

As a preacher, he has been described by a contemporary, himself a master in the pulpit.

"Asbury, as a preacher, occupied the front rank among ministers. He was deep, spiritual, and animated. He defended, illustrated, and enforced the doctrines of the gospel with great energy of thought and strength of expression. His grasp of thoughts being great, and his mind naturally systematic, his discourses were well arranged, and full of instruction. He had a singular art of comprising any leading doctrine in all its bearings and consequences, within the compass of a few words. Hence, though his sermons were generally short, yet they contained a vast deal of matter. His voice was strong and manly, yet it was sweet and pleasing. His oratory was bold and dignified, but it was natural. It sometimes broke forth impetuously upon the immense multitudes that attended his ministry, and moved them as the trees of the forests are moved by a mighty wind."

The personal appearance of Asbury was prepossessing. His height was about five feet eight or ten inches; his eyes were hazle, of a bluish cast, small and piercing; his forehead was high and square, indicating superior intellectual faculties. His hair was

originally brown; he had in his earlier years a fair, healthful, English complexion, and his face was striking and impressive.

We may close this sketch with an estimate of his character from one who fully appreciates his worth.

"Bishop Asbury was one of those very few men whom nature forms in no ordinary mould. His mind was stamped with a certain greatness and originality which lifted him far above the merely learned man, and fitted him to be great without science, and venerable without titles. His knowledge of men was profound and penetrating; hence he looked into character as one looks into a clear stream to discover the bottom; yet he did not use this penetration to compass any unworthy purposes; the policy of knowing men in order to make the most of them, was a littleness to which he never stooped. He had only one end in view, and that was worthy the dignity of an angel; from this nothing ever warped him aside. He seemed conscious that God had designed him for a great work, and nothing was wanting on his part to fulfil the intention of Providence. The niche was cut in the great temple of usefulness, and he stretched himself to fill it up in all its dimensions. To him the widest career of labor and duty presented no obstacle. Like a moral Cæsar, he thought nothing done while anything remained to do. His penetrating eye measured the ground over which he intended to sow the seeds of eternal life, while his courageous and active mind cheerfully embraced all the difficulties engrafted upon his labors. He worshipped no God of the name of *Terminus*, but stretched 'his line of

things' far beyond the bounds of ordinary minds. An annual journey of six thousand miles through a wilderness, would have sunk a feebler mind into dispondency; but nothing retarded his progress, or once moved him from the line of duty. He pursued the most difficult and laborious course, as most men do their pleasures; and although for many years he was enfeebled by sickness, and worn with age and infirmity, two hundred thousand persons saw with astonishment the hoary veteran 'still standing in his lot,' or 'pressing his vast line' of duty with undiminished zeal. The Methodist connection in America gloried in having such a man to preside at their head, and few of the preachers ever spoke of his integrity, diligence and zeal, without imputing to themselves some worth in having him as their Bishop.

"To all that bore the appearance of polished and pleasing life, he was dead; and both from habit and divine grace had acquired such a true greatness of mind, that he seemed to estimate nothing as excellent but what tended to the glory of God. Flattery, of which many great minds are highly susceptible, found him fortified behind a double guard of humility, and opposition but served to awaken those energies of mind which rise with difficulties and surmount the greatest. He knew nothing about pleasing the flesh at the expense of duty; flesh and blood were enemies with whom he never took counsel; he took a high standing upon the rugged Alps of labor, and to all that lagged behind, he said, 'Come up hither.' He was a rigid enemy to ease; hence the pleasures of study and the charms of recreation he alike sacrificed

to the more sublime work of saving souls. His faith was a 'constant evidence of things not seen,' for he lived as a man totally blind to all worldly attractions. It is true that his self-denial savored of austerity, and yet he could sympathize with another's weakness. * * * His was the solemnity of an Apostle; it was so interwoven with his conduct that he could not put off the gravity of the Bishop either in the parlor or dining-room. Wisdom was not more distinct from folly than his conduct was from any thing akin to trifling. He had stated hours of retirement and prayer, upon which he let neither business nor company break in. Prayer was the seasoning of all his avocations; he never suffered the cloth to be removed from the table until he had kneeled down to address the Almighty; it was the preface to all business, and often the link that connected opposite duties, and the conclusion of whatever he took in hand. Divine wisdom seemed to direct all his undertakings, for he sought its counsels upon all occasions; no part of his conduct was the result of accident; the plan by which he transacted all his affairs was as regular as the movements of a time-piece, hence he had no idle moments, no fragments of time broken and scattered up and down; no cause to say with Titus, 'my friends, I have lost a day.' Pleading with God in secret, settling the various questions of the body over which he presided, or speaking 'to men for their edification' in the pulpit, occupied all his time.

"As a preacher, although not an orator, he was dignified, eloquent, and impressive; his sermons were the result of good sense and sound wisdom, delivered

with great authority and gravity, and often attended with Divine unction, which made them as refreshing as the dew of heaven. One of the last subjects I heard him preach upon was union and brotherly love; it was the greatest I ever heard upon that subject."

The remains of Asbury were interred in the family burying ground of Mr. Arnold. They were afterward removed to Baltimore, by order of the General Conference, and placed in a vault beneath the pulpit of Eutaw Street Church. Bishop McKendree delivered a funeral discourse on the occasion to a vast concourse of people, and the dust of the first American Protestant Bishop was left to its repose until the land and the sea shall give up their dead.

A few months after the death of Asbury, one of his most eminent co-laborers descended to the grave. On the 12th of September, Jesse Lee ceased his long and useful life in full hope of immortality in heaven. From the Baltimore Conference of 1816, to which he had been transferred, he was sent to Annapolis, the capital of Maryland. Here he labored with his accustomed zeal and industry until the close of the Summer, when he attended a Camp Meeting near Hillsboro, on the Eastern Shore of the State. He entered into the spirit of the meeting, and preached with great unction and power. His last and most profitable sermon was from one of his favorite texts, "But grow in grace." The vast congregation was deeply affected by the earnest appeals of the veteran preacher. This was his last public testimony. He was seized with a chill the same evening, and a fever followed, which never broke till cooled by the touch

of death. He was removed the next day to the house of a Christian friend, Mr. Sellers, where every attention was paid him by friends and physicians, but without avail. His Master had called him to come up higher. During the first part of his illness his mind seemed burdened, and he spoke but little. At length the burden was lifted, the clouds broke, and the "Sun of Righteousness" shone upon his soul. On the morning of Wednesday he exclaimed: "Glory! glory! glory! Hallelujah! Jesus reigns!" In the evening of the same day he spoke nearly twenty minutes, deliberately and distinctly. He sent messages to his kindred, assuring them that he died happy in the Lord. "Give my respects to Bishop McKendree," he said, "and tell him that I die in love with all the preachers; that I love him, and that he lives in my heart." He then took leave of the company in the room, and desired them to engage in prayer. After this he spoke but little. The next day he lost his speech, but his mind was clear. Thus he lingered until seven in the evening, when he calmly expired with his eye fixed on the crown of glory.

"We have no doubt," said his brethren in their notice of his death, "he has entered into rest—that he now partakes of that happiness to which he endeavored to lead others; and if we are faithful we may expect to hail him on that eternal shore, 'where all is calm, and joy, and peace.'"

His remains were deposited in the Methodist burying ground in Baltimore, awaiting the summons that shall bring him and all the holy dead to receive the plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

CHAPTER XV.

General Conference of 1816—The Presiding Elder and other questions—Election of Bishops—Protest against Slavery—Conference of 1817—Report of Committee on Slavery—Movement on the subject of Education—Progress of the Work—Revival Scenes—Conference of 1818—Peter Doub—Hezekiah G. Leigh—George W. Charlton—New Church in Petersburg—Fletcher Harris—Increase of the Church in the Valley—Thomas Kennerly—Power of Prayer—Conference of 1819—Action on Slavery—Walker Timberlake—Work in Botetourt and adjacent Circuits—Samuel Kennerly—Camp Meeting Scenes—Conference of 1820—Moses Brock—Philip Courtney—General Conference of 1820—Virginia Conference of 1821—Thomas Crowder Revivals—Conference of 1822—Address of Bishop McKendree on the Presiding Elder Question—Response of the Conference—General outpouring of the Spirit—Great Revival in Petersburg—Conference of 1823—William Hammit—Peyton Anderson.

The second delegated General Conference assembled at Baltimore May 1st, 1816. For the first time since the organization of the Church, the venerable leader and honored father, Asbury, was not among his sons. He had gone to fill his seat among the Elders of the Church Triumphant. His absence cast a gloom over the Conference. In solemn silence they listened to the reading of his valedictory address. His spirit seemed to hover over them, whispering those words of cheering which had so often fallen from his lips while he went in and out among them. One of their first acts was to make the necessary

preparations for the removal of his body to its place of final sepulture.

In glancing at the proceedings of this Conference, we notice a new naming of the committees raised for preparing and bringing forward business. Besides the usual committees on the Episcopacy, and the Book Concern, there was a "Committee of Ways and Means," whose special duty it was "to take into consideration the necessary arrangements for the more ample support of the ministry, to prevent locations, and the admission of improper persons into the travelling connexion;"—there was also a "Committee of Safety," who were charged with the duty of inquiring "whether our doctrines have been maintained, discipline faithfully and impartially enforced, and the stations and circuits duly attended,"—"the Committee of the Temporal Economy" settled all matters relating to the establishment of new Conferences, fixing their boundaries, &c.

The "Committee of Ways and Means" recommended to the Conference that the annual allowance of the preachers, and that of their wives and widows be one hundred dollars. They also recommended the buying or renting of parsonages for the use of the preachers, and the appointment of circuit and district committees to estimate the family expenses of the Preachers and Presiding Elders. They further advised the taking up of an annual collection in behalf of "the distressed, travelling, superannuated, and supernumerary preachers, their wives, widows, and children"—this is now known as the "Conference collection." The Bishops were requested to "point out

a course of study and reading proper to be pursued by candidates for the ministry." The adoption of this report had a happy influence on the ministry and laity by raising the spirit of liberality in the one, and stimulating the other to seek higher ministerial qualifications.

The "Committee of Safety" recommended the most careful inquiries, on the part of the Bishops, in order to ascertain whether any doctrines were embraced or preached in the Church contrary to our Articles of Faith, and the exercise of their influence to correct such abuses. The Presiding Elders and Preachers on stations and circuits, were charged with the duty of securing all Church property on the principles of our deed of settlement. The building of pewed churches was declared to be "contrary to the rules of our economy, and inconsistent with the interests of our societies." "The practice of assessing and *collecting taxes* by civil law for the support of the ministers of the gospel," which seems to have prevailed to some extent, was pronounced "contrary to the temporal economy of our Church, and inconsistent with Apostolic example," and the Bishops were requested to take such measures as would effectually cure this evil. The Bishops, Presiding Elders, and Preachers, were all "earnestly requested to carry into effect, in their several charges, our rules on *dress*, *family worship*, love-feasts, class, and society meetings."

This report was not incorporated in the Discipline, but it was ordered "that a copy be recorded on the Journal of each Annual Conference."

Several memorials were presented to this Conference from local preachers praying an enlargement of their privileges. 1. To have a representation in the councils of the Church. 2. Be permitted to share in the administration of Discipline. 3. To stipulate with the people, who might wish for their services, for a certain amount of salary. To these requests the Conference, through its Committee, replied, "that the first request is inconsistent with the Constitution of the General Conference; that the second is inexpedient; that as to the third, provision is already made for the relief of local preachers in certain cases." The Conference felt happy in saying "that the great body of local preachers were, in their judgment, the firm friends and supporters of our doctrines, discipline, and Church government; and that by far the greater part of them would be much grieved at any radical changes in our present regulations." The whole question was dismissed after a few amendments to those portions of the Discipline having reference to local preachers. But this memorial was the first utterance of a voice that afterwards rose to imperious tones in demanding a radical change in the Constitution of the Church.

With the exception of the election of Enoch George and Robert Richford Roberts, to the Episcopacy, these were the most important acts of this General Conference.

The action on slavery was of little consequence. The Committee made a subdued report, which was adopted by the Conference. After mature deliberation, they were of opinion "that under the present

existing circumstances in relation to slavery, little can be done to abolish a practice so contrary to the principles of moral justice." The evil appeared to them to be past remedy, and they were led to fear that some of the members were too easily contented with laws unfriendly to the freedom of the slaves in the South and West—to bring about such a change in the civil code as would favor the cause of liberty, they admitted was not within the power of the General Conference. Many of the Annual Conferences had made no efficient rules on the subject, and the people were left to act as they pleased. Others had adopted regulations widely variant in principle and application, and all plead the authority of the General Conference of 1812, giving to each Annual Conference the right to form its own regulations relative to buying and selling slaves. To give conformity to Church action, they made their protest to read: "Therefore no slaveholder shall be eligible to any official station in our Church hereafter, where the laws of the State, in which he lives, will admit of emancipation, and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom."

That old "bone of contention," the Presiding Elder question, was again dragged into this Conference. It had many strong friends, was debated with ability and zeal for several days in "Committee of the Whole," and was finally lost by a vote of forty-two in favor and sixty against it. The report of the Committee then came up before the Conference, when, after further debate, the vote was called for and a motion made to divide the question. Bishop Mc-

Kendree ruled the motion out of order. This decision was appealed from, but was sustained by the Conference. The vote was then taken on the first part of the main question and lost—thirty-eight in favor, sixty-three against it. And so the subject received its quietus for another four years.

The Virginia Conference for 1817 met at Petersburg on the 5th of February. Bishops McKendree and George were present. Six were received on trial; two were reädmitted; nine were elected to Deacon's orders; seven were ordained Elders; two were discontinued; eight located; two had died; twelve local preachers were ordained to Deacon's, and four to Elder's orders.

The numbers in Society were reported at 18,883 whites, 5,936 colored; the increase was small, 151 whites and 315 blacks.

There is no mention of deficiencies, collections, or receipts from the Chartered Fund or Book Concern. The number of circuits was 41; 64 preachers were appointed.

The Committee on slavery, appointed at the previous Conference, made the following report: "That the members of our Church shall not buy or sell any slave where it does not appear to the preacher having charge, and the Society, or a Committee appointed by him, that they are bought or sold for the express purpose of keeping husbands and wives, parents and children together, or from principles of humanity. And in every case of violation of the above rule, such persons so offending, shall be dealt with according to Discipline, as in other cases of immorality.

"*Resolved*, by this Conference, that every Presiding Elder, and assistant preacher, be furnished with a copy of the above rule, and that each assistant preacher read it in conjunction with the General Rules of our Church."

We find in the records for this year the following: "A motion was made by C. H. Hines, and seconded, that a committee be appointed to examine and report on certain communications sent to this Conference relative to the education of youth and young ministers." The Conference decided, by a vote, that the Presiding Elders present should compose the committee to examine and report thereon. They were C. H. Hines, Jno. T. Weaver, Edward Cannon, Thomas Barge, and Ethelbert Drake. All we know of the action of the Conference on this subject is, that "the committee appointed to take into consideration the propriety and necessity of establishing a Seminary of learning within the bounds of the Virginia Conference reported, and a motion was made for concurrence, and after some debate the vote was taken and the motion was lost." This is the earliest movement on record of Conference action on the subject of education. It is to be regretted that this memorial has been lost, inasmuch as it prevents us from tracing the progress of this movement from its incipiency to its completion.

The Conference was called to mourn the loss of two good men. Samuel Waggoner, a native of Stokes county, North Carolina, had been a faithful laborer for five years. "He was constant as a friend; as a minister he was zealous, and frequently labored

hard." He sank under consumption; and at his father's house, surrounded by weeping friends, he died in full assurance of faith.

Peter Wyatt was born in Gloucester county, and had been four years in the work. Three years he preached with success, and in the midst of the fourth was stricken down by a lingering disease. But he murmured not against the Providence of God. The day before he died he fell into a swoon; his friends thought him gone; but reviving, after a while, and seeing them weeping around him, he exclaimed, "Weep not for me." He then spoke of the joys of the saints, and the miseries of the wicked in the most impressive manner; then laying his hands upon his breast he died without a struggle. Truly religion gathers her brightest proofs from the death-beds of her votaries. "Our people die well," is one of the most blessed utterances of Methodism.

The progress of the Church in Virginia was this this year marked, in some localities, by powerful revivals; but their memorials are unwritten, and linger only in the memories of aged Christians. The printed records present a barren field to the historic gleaner. In the lower part of the Valley there were uncommon displays of divine mercy and power. At Stephensburg, in Frederick county, the small society was graciously visited by the Holy Spirit, and more than a hundred were converted.

The Church at Winchester had fallen into a lukewarm state; but at a quarterly meeting the Lord came to His temple, and a hundred happy souls attested the power of His grace to save from sin. At

a Camp Meeting near Charlestown, Jefferson county, a great number received the word of life, and the Christians rejoiced in a fresh baptism from heaven. As usual, on such occasions, the sons of Belial came up with the people of the Lord. An incident related by an eye-witness will show that the preachers, in dealing with these "rude fellows of the baser sort," had sometimes to go beyond the gravity and decorum suitable to such occasions. At this meeting a godless fellow assumed the character of a penitent for the amusement of his wicked comrades. He threw himself in the way of the preacher in charge of the circuit, and was recognized by him as one who had already greatly annoyed the meeting. The preacher spoke to him as if he thought him penitent; the young man assured him that he was deeply concerned for his soul, and proposed to go into the altar; but the preacher told him to kneel where he stood, and dropped on his knees holding fast the young sinner. He began his prayer by telling the Lord who the man was, giving his name, and then recounting his wicked acts—"he had cut the tents, thrown a fire-brand among the mourners, climbed the trees, crowed like a cock, aped the rain frogs"—and done numerous other pranks of a like kind. By the time this description of his character was completed he had slipped away, and was not seen again during the meeting. Four or five of the boldest still lingered about the altar, declaring that the whole was a mere farce, one of them telling his companions that he could act his part as well as any of the pretended penitents. So saying, he entered the altar and fell on his knees;

instantly he began to tremble, and weep, and pray. His comrades were highly amused, and declared that he acted his part to the life; but soon they saw that he was in earnest, and could not suppress his tears and cries. One of them proposed to go in and bring him out; he entered, and just as he laid his hand upon him he was smitten by the Spirit and fell by the side of his friend, crying aloud for mercy; a third now ran to the rescue, but no sooner had he touched them, than he, too, fell prostrate, and joined the cry for pardon. The remaining two fled from the place, and the three penitents were soon happily converted.

The Conference for 1818 assembled at Norfolk on the 26th of February. Bishops McKendree, George, and Roberts, were present. Fourteen young men were admitted on trial; two were reädmitted; two were discontinued; ten elected to Deacon's, seven to Elder's orders; eleven located; one was returned supernumerary, and one superannuated; seven local preachers were ordained Deacons, and seven to the Eldership. The membership amounted to 18,137 whites; 5,547 colored; there was a sad decrease of 746 whites, and 479 blacks. The circuit collections are not reported; the Conference drew $130 from the Chartered Fund, and $200 from the Book Concern. We find the following in the Minutes:

Resolved, That the members of this Conference will use their exertions in promoting the interests of the Asbury Mite Society of Norfolk.

"*Resolved*, That the Directors of said Society be requested to communicate annually to this Conference, the state of the Society."

This seems to have been the only Society that flourished in Virginia on the plan proposed by Asbury. It was no doubt similar to the Wesleyan penny-a-week system.

The circuits numbered 39, supplied by 64 preachers.

Three names appear in the appointments of this Conference that have filled a large space in the history of Methodism in Virginia and North Carolina. Peter Doub, Hezekiah G. Leigh, and George W. Charlton, this year began their course as Methodist preachers. Two have gone to their reward, one still survives.* The first named rose more slowly than his compeers, but not less steadily, to the position of a master workman in the Church. Leigh and Charlton rapidly ascended to the heights of pulpit eloquence. Leigh had the form, the face, the eye, the voice of an orator. At the first glance you would say, 'he is a man of power.' Like all men of rare eloquence, he had strong passions, but these, controlled by grace, were an irresistible motive power in his sermons; they fused the masses of thought, and rolled them upon the soul till all its powers felt and responded to the burning touch. He could argue with force, but his peculiar power lay in description. No man in his day could excel him in word-painting. He could dash off a picture by a few bold strokes, so deep in coloring and so vivid in outline, that his hearers were startled as if by an apparition; or he could slowly fill up the canvass of thought by successive touches till the whole scene was fixed in the mind never to be erased. In beginning his sermons he was collected and calm, his words

*Rev. C. Doub has died since this was written.

were well chosen, his sentences round and full, his voice deep and mellow; as his mind moved on through the field of thought, gathering at every step arguments and illustrations, a change passed over him. The flush on his face deepened, his form seemed to expand, his eye kindled till it blazed, his voice swelled out in clearer, stronger tones, like a bugle calling to the charge, his words came in torrents, with that slight, but peculiar nasal sound, noticed by all who ever heard him, as if the channels of breath must be opened wider to give path to the mighty thoughts that struggled for release.

Some men are called eloquent because they have a brilliant fancy; but Leigh had the higher gift of imagination. His colorings were not from the artificial boquet; they were from the gorgeous, mingled splendors in the train of the setting sun. He dealt not in little foam-capped waves of thought; his were deep-sea billows, swelling and rising as they rolled; the stream by which he pictured the waters of salvation, was not the brook, singing along over its pebbly bed, amid fresh grasses and fragrant blooms, but the deep, wide, majestic river, bearing its freights of priceless value.

Perhaps no man ever left a deeper impression on the hearts of the people among whom he labored. In every city where he was stationed, in every district, in every circuit, there are thrilling recollections of his preaching. The present writer will never forget a sermon which he heard from him more than twenty years ago. He was then advanced in life, and had lost somewhat of the force and fire of his earlier

years, but he was still great, and the sermon was a masterpiece in thought and language. It was at a Camp Meeting, one of those grand assemblies, which, beyond all others of any kind on this continent, have witnessed the highest efforts and the greatest triumphs of human eloquence. He arrived on the ground a day or two after the meeting had begun, and was of course invited to preach at an important hour. His preparation was made as he sat in the preacher's tent, with a large Bible open before him, on his knees. Seemingly unconscious of the numbers passing in and out, and of the conversation going on around him, he selected his text and arranged his thoughts. His subject was from the parable of the Rich Fool. The words read as a text were: "So is every one that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

Those who have heard him will readily perceive that he at once entered a field of thought peculiarly adapted to his mind. He boldly explored it, and brought forth all its treasures. The whole of the discourse was superior; but the close, in which he depicted the fatal influence of such a character as the text portrayed during his life and after his death, was indeed grand. He closed with a scene in which the rich fool, riding on the crest of a burning wave, looks upward and discovers his deluded victims descending to share his woe and upbraid him with their ruin. His wail, as they "splashed down" beside him in the fiery flood, seemed to sound out over the awestruck multitude, and, "So is every one that layeth up trea-

sure for himself, and is not rich toward God," was heard as from the very depths of hell.

He was not simply an eloquent preacher; he was a wise, skilful, practical workman in the vineyard. He filled for years, with great acceptance, the responsible office of Presiding Elder; he was among the first to perceive the necessity for a higher standard of education among people and preachers, and he was one of the founders, and to the close of his life the ardent patron, of Randolph Macon College. He was the first Agent for that Institution appointed by the Conference, and for four years he labored for its endowment with signal success. His appeals were almost irresistible. On one occasion, having preached with great power at a Camp Meeting, and closed with an appeal for the College, a wealthy, but wicked man, who had heard him, said to a friend who proposed to introduce him to the preacher, "No, sir; I don't wish to come any nearer to that man." Leigh afterward met with him, was introduced, and after a brief conversation the gentleman handed him one hundred dollars for the College. After a life of great usefulness to the Church, he was called to his place among the Elders near the throne.

His contemporary, George W. Charleton,* was in the day of his manhood's prime, a preacher of unusual eloquence and power. He was eminently successful in winning souls to Christ. Like a veteran warrior, he enjoys the quiet of his home, and entertains his friends with the pleasing reminiscences of

*Mr. Charlton has since entered eternal rest.

those years, when, in the vigor of his health and the plenitude of pulpit power, he gathered rich trophies to the cause of God on every field of conflict. May the light of grace gild the clouds that overhang the descending path of life.

The records of Church progress for this year are extremely meager. In Petersburg there was encouraging signs of improvement under the ministry of Fletcher Harris, a young preacher of much promise. He was amiable, dignified, of more than ordinary piety, eloquent and convincing in the pulpit; as a pastor, he was humble, faithful, and diligent. These qualities greatly endeared him to the Church and the community. The old house of worship became too small to hold the crowds that flocked to hear him. A proposition for the erection of a new church met with general favor. The old one was sold, liberal contributions were made, a lot was bought on Union Street, and before the middle of the year the foundation of a new building was laid. While this house was being built, the Methodists worshipped in the Episcopal Church, which was tendered by the Rector, a man of enlarged views and liberal feelings towards other Christians. Harris continued to draw large and delighted congregations; but alas! in the midst of his usefulness he was stricken down by a fatal illness. The light of grace shone as brightly in the sick room as it had in the pulpit. Singing and prayer were delightful exercises to the dying pastor. A few days before he died, sitting in his bed, he repeated and eloquently enlarged upon the words, "Receive us, we have wronged no man," until all who were present

wept together about his bed. To his brethren in the ministry his message was, "Tell the preachers, at Conference, that I died in the triumphs of faith; that my last doctrine is, *Free Salvation.*" A friend standing by, said, "Brother Harris, this is not dying." "No," he replied, "it is living forever!" He mentioned by name his aged parents, brothers and sisters, and sent them his affectionate and last farewell. When very near his end, his brother, wishing to hear the sound of his voice once more, said, "Brother Fletcher, you are going to leave us." "Presently," he replied faintly, and in a few moments passed the flood and entered the gates of the golden city. He was a native of North Carolina, and had been in the work five years. He being dead, yet speaketh.

The Valley, where Methodism has gathered richly since its introduction, was this year the scene of glorious revivals. On Winchester circuit, under the the labors of Thomas Kennerly, an honored name in the Church, more than eight hundred souls were during this and the past year brought to God.

An instance of the power of prayer is related as having occurred under the ministry of this excellent man, which is worthy of record. On one of his circuits he made the acquaintance of a lady who had been for years a happy and useful Christian; but at that time she was in a state of almost utter despair, the combined result of disease and temptation. She could hardly be persuaded to attend preaching, though her house was one of the regular appointments. One day in class-meeting, after hearing from her own lips a recital of her sad case, he proposed to pray specially

for her restoration. At the close of an earnest appeal she sprang up, exclaiming, "I am free, I am free! Thanks be to God, I am happy in his love once more!" From that moment she began to improve, until she was fully restored to health; and she continued happy in religion until the close of her life.

Another incident in his life will show how the Lord directs his servants to scenes of usefulness. He had travelled month after month on a rough circuit in the Western part of the State, without being cheered by a single sign of revival. At the close of one of his toilsome rounds, he sat down discouraged, and began to reflect on his future course. In the midst of his reflections, he felt a sudden impulse to visit a village to which he was an utter stranger, many miles distant from his circuit. He mounted his horse, reached the place after a long ride, and put up at the hotel. Inquiring for the prominent citizens, he was directed to a magistrate, who kindly granted him the Courthouse as a preaching place, and gave him his favor and protection. Here he began to preach without a solitary member of the Church to encourage or pray for him. His word came with power, a great revival broke out, many of the leading inhabitants were converted, a church was soon organized, and Methodism firmly planted.

The Conference of 1819 met at Oxford, North Caralina, on the 10th of February. Bishop Roberts presided; seven were admitted on trial; one readmitted; two discontinued; six located; one had died; two were returned; supernumerary, and two superannuated; three Deacons and nine Elders were ordained;

six local preachers elected to Deacon's, and seven to Elder's orders. The receipts of money were, from the Book Concern, $300; from the Chartered Fund, $180; no record of collections from the circuits. The aggregate membership was reported at 17,234 whites, and 5,351 colored; of these 8,465 whites, and 2,950 colored were in North Carolina; in Virginia, 8,769 whites, and 2,401 blacks. As compared with the returns of the preceding year, there was a heavy loss of nearly 1,100 members. The entire memberships in the State, as shown by the returns of Conferences having circuits therein, was 20,544 whites, and 4,826 colored. The circuits reported were, 18 in North Carolina, and 20 in Virginia; the former supplied by 29, the latter by 35 preachers. The whole number of circuits in Virginia was 46, the preachers sent to them from the different Conferences numbered 78. The following passed at this session:

"*Resolved*, That the rule on slavery, adopted by this Conference in the year 1817, be abolished; and that the rule adopted in 1813, in the following words be substituted in its place: 'If any member of the Methodist Episcopal Church be found guilty of carrying on, directly or indirectly, the trade of slave speculation, he or she shall be expelled the Church.'"

After considerable discussion the vote was taken and the motion was lost. So the rule of 1817 remained in force.

Among the local preachers ordained Deacons at this conference appears the name of Walker Timberlake. But few more efficient and useful local preachers

have ever been raised up in Virginia. He was converted in 1811 at a Camp Meeting in Albemarle county, and fully gave himself to the work of God. In 1815 he was licensed as a preacher, and from that time to the present has labored with undiminished zeal. His mind is clear, strong, and eminently practical. Methodism, as "Christianity in earnest," is exactly adapted to his views and feelings. Her economy, government and doctrines, he thoroughly understands, and preaches them by precept and the most rigid example. He is wise in counsel, sagacious and active in business, deeply experimented in religion, forcible and pathetic in preaching, and one of those rare friends who will as kindly tell you of your faults as he will generously commend your virtues. Within the sphere of his labors, no man has been more successful in planting, nourishing, and defending Methodism; and yet he is free from bigotry, saying to every true follower of Christ, "if thy heart be as my heart, give me thy hand."

A contemporary of Asbury, McKendree, Lee, Douglass, and others of the fathers, his memory abounds in the most interesting reminiscences of the times when these great lights moved and shone among the churches. Calmly he awaits the hour, when he, too, shall cross the flood and rejoin them in the land of rest. May the weight of years press lightly upon him, and the friend and counsellor of so many, among whom the writer feels it an honor to be numbered, have the sweetest counsel and comfort from the "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother."*

*Since this was written he has entered into rest.

"Times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" came to many of the churches this year, and the ingathering of souls in some quarters was great. Through the courtesy of Rev. Samuel Kennerly, we are enabled to present an interesting sketch of the work in Botetourt and the adjacent circuits.

"I was the first preacher," says Mr. Kennerly, "that ever got an appointment at Christiansburg, Montgomery county. It was a very dissolute place, with but one solitary Methodist. I preached in the Court-house, and had, generally, good attendance and order, with the exception of a disposition in many to walk about with their hats on, smoke cigars, and eat fruit in time of service, giving a true picture of backwoods life, and freedom of action." The seed sown here took root and yielded fruit. During the Summer at a quarterly meeting in Fincastle, the work broke out with unusual power. "On Sabbath, under a sermon from the Presiding Elder, L. R. Fechtig, the power of the Almighty fell on the congregation suddenly. Many fell in every part of the house and cried for mercy, while others shouted in triumph. Many persons pulled their relatives and friends out of the house, but they could not flee from the presence of God. Out of doors, turn whither they would, they saw and heard proof of His power to convict and convert, for this hallowed influence seemed to pervade the town. A gay young lady, passing from the house to the kitchen, at a distance of several hundred yards from the Church, fell prostrate on the ground and was unable to rise. She screamed for mercy as though she felt like David, when he said,

'the powers of hell gat hold upon me.' She was carried into the house and a physician called, the family being ignorant of the cause of her distress. But she felt that she had more need of a spiritual than a medical adviser, and begged her mother to send for a Methodist minister. Both were sent for. The doctor pronounced her beyond his skill, and gave up the case to the preacher. She was soon converted, and lived and died a happy Christian.

"A young man in his stable was suddenly seized with conviction, and ran through the streets crying for mercy in the bitterest agony. But few persons in the place were unconcerned, and for a week business was almost wholly suspended, the care of the soul being the chief concern. The Society and Congregation were so much increased by this revival that we were compelled to build a large house of worship.

"In the town of Salem, one of our Sabbath appointments, lived a Brother Acton, pious and hospitable. His house was my home when in the place, but in the course of the year he moved away, and I was compelled to put up at a public house for want of an invitation elsewhere. When I preached my last sermon, and had made the appointments for my successor, I took the occasion to tell the congregation that I had preached for them a year to the best of my ability, was now about to leave them, and perhaps should see them no more on earth; but I hoped they would not treat my successor as they had treated me, for neither man nor woman had invited me into a house nor offered me a night's lodging nor a meals'

victuals; that I had darkened no man's door, unless to see the sick; that if they would become better acquainted with the Methodist preachers, they would find them intelligent, sociable and clever men, and as good friends as they had on earth. The preachers for years afterward, as they informed me, found no want of hospitality in the town, and the reproof that I gave them was often spoken of. Methodism has flourished through all that country."

At a Camp Meeting near Blacksburg, there was a gracious outpouring of the Spirit. An incident connected with this meeting is related by the same writer.

"General Preston, Ex-Governor of Virginia, and family, were in attendance every day. They had a large tent in which they entertained their friends, but returned home at night. The old General was much pleased with the exercises. A few days after the close of the meeting he was visited by his brother-in-law, Dr. Floyd, who was known to be deistical in his sentiments. In conversation they talked of the recent Camp Meeting, the Methodist preachers, &c. The Doctor remarked that there was one fact that he had never been able to account for, and that was that while the ministers of some other churches had greatly the advantage of the Methodist ministers in point of education, the latter were so far their superiors in clearness of position, force of argument, and power of eloquence. 'Why, Doctor,' said the General, 'do you not understand the secret?' 'No,' replied he, 'it is beyond my comprehension.' 'It is as plain,' said the General, 'as a sun-beam.' 'How do you account for it?' asked the Doctor. 'Because,' said

the General, 'they have the unction of the Holy Ghost.'"

He thus describes another Camp Meeting of extraordinary power: "It was held in Wythe county, on the New River circuit. I attended in company with Fechtig, Bromwell, and other preachers. The meeting began and progressed with a great deal of interest; a number of souls found peace. The last night, at midnight, Fechtig preached on the sudden coming of the bridegroom: 'Go ye out to meet him;' and though the sermon was powerful, there was little or no excitement; in fact, there was a perfect drag. Bromwell and I begged him to let us have the management of the meeting, and we would have what we called a *march;* he refused, we insisted; finally he consented; but said he would have no part in it, and that we should bear the responsibility of a failure. I then had the ends of the altar taken out, and told the friends who usually sat in it, that when they saw Bromwell and myself at the upper end of the encampment, they must come to us and do just as we did. We then had all the camp-fires lit up afresh, and taking our stand close together at the upper part of the ground, began to sing. The outsiders now began to gather around us, and our friends from the altar around them. We then called them to prayer. After prayer (having previously instructed the trumpeter what to do,) we began to sing, 'Blow ye the trumpet blow,' and started in a slow march for the altar encircling the camp-ground; at intervals the trumpet was blown, while the chorus of the hymn swelled out in full power. The number increased as the trumpet

called them from their tents. The scene now became awfully solemn. Many in the moving throng cried aloud for mercy, others shouted for joy, while many broke away, ran into the woods and fell at the feet of their horses in trying to escape. The ground was literally strewn with penitents from the starting place to the altar; we now stopped the procession. I then began to exhort from the stand, another preacher from the altar poles, and Fechtig out in the congregation. The people fell all over the encampment; there was a universal cry for mercy, mingled with shouts of the redeemed. There were more converts from that time to the close of the exercises the next day, than there had been during the previous days of the meeting. There were some who left the ground at the highest speed of their horses, and reaching home, fell prostrate on the floor in powerful conviction. Our movements, after blowing the trumpet, were all unpremeditated; we acted and spoke as the Spirit moved us."

This was truly an awful and glorious night. The reader will readily and justly conclude, that the minds of the people had been prepared, and their hearts deeply impressed by the exercises of the previous days, and especially by the solemn midnight sermon of such a preacher as Fechtig. The march, the singing, the call of the trumpet to join the procession, then the last earnest and powerful exhortations of the preachers, contributed to finish the work of conviction, and extort the cry, "What must we do to be saved?"

In other parts of this District, (Greenbrier,) there were powerful revivals and many additions to the

Church. In Rockingham circuit more than two hundred were converted in the course of six months. The work broke out at a Camp Meeting held near Harrisonburg, and the sacred flame spread gloriously through the county. Persons of all ages shared in these gracious influences. Children of tender years sought and found pardon, and their astonishing fluency and unaffected simplicity in narrating the work of grace to their parents, had the happiest effect in bringing whole families to the knowledge of the truth. Many who had been vile opposers of religion, were smitten with conviction, and not a few of these embraced the faith they once sought to destroy.

In Greenbrier circuit the work was equally great, nearly three hundred having been gathered into the gospel fold during the year.

The venerable Valentine Cook this year made a visit to the scenes of his early labors in Pennsylvania and Virginia. While in the latter State an incident occurred which resulted in a glorious revival. He was invited to spend the night with a wealthy gentleman whose family, consisting of himself, his wife and sister-in-law, were infidels. The evening conversation was on general subjects, and the time passed swiftly and pleasantly. The next morning the gentleman was called away at an early hour. Before Cook left he felt impressed that Providence had led him to that house, where, perhaps, a minister had never before passed a night. "I must not leave," he said to himself, "till I have made an effort to do them some good." Finding the sister-in-law alone in the parlor, he took his seat by her side and spoke point-

edly on the importance of religion. "But," said he, "my words fell pointless at her feet. She could look me full in the face and answer with unhesitating flippancy. I paused, and looked within, and asked myself if my heart was perfectly right to hold that conversation. I found reason to think it was not. I arose and retired to the woods; there, for many hours, I wrestled in earnest prayer for a preparation to address the lady as I should. The power came in the form of melting love. I returned, and providentially found the lady again alone in the parlor. I recommenced the conversation in about the same strain as before, but with quite different effect. Her head dropped, her eye filled, her bosom heaved; the victory was complete. The arrows of the Almighty stuck fast, and drank up her spirits." He soon after left, but the "nail was fastened in a sure place." The gentleman came home and found both the ladies in tears. On learning the cause he became indignant, swore vengeance against the preacher, who, he said, invited to his house as a gentleman, had taken advantage of his courtesy to destroy the peace of his family. He would horse-whip him on sight. But the power of grace worked mightily, wife and sister soon found peace. The madman was calmed, conquered, and sat down at the feet of Jesus clothed and in his right mind. A few days after the preacher was seen approaching the house. The happy man rushed out to meet him, not with horse-whip in hand, but with the light of a new joy in his eye, and the love of Christ in his heart. A week's preaching in the

neighborhood resulted in the conversion of one hundred souls.

The Conference for 1820 began at Richmond on the 23d February. Bishop George presided. Six candidates were admitted on trial; two were reädmitted; eight located; two had died; one was returned supernumerary; three were superannuated; thirteen Deacons and six Elders were elected and ordained; of the local preachers eleven were elected to Deacon's, and six to Elder's orders. The amount received from the Book Concern was $300; from the Chartered Fund, $170; there is no record of circuit collections. The number of members was 17,626 whites, and 6,130 colored; of these North Carolina had 8,450 whites, 3,468 colored; Virginia, 9,176 whites, 2,662 colored. A decrease was again reported of more than 1,000 in the bounds of the Conference. The returns from all the circuits in the State showed 21,907 white, and 5,249 colored members; the increase was above 1,700. There were 21 circuits in North Carolina, and 20 in Virginia; the latter had 33, the former 29 preachers; 48 was the whole number of circuits in the State, supplied by 81 preachers.

The following were elected delegates to the General Conference: E. Drake, James Patterson, John T. Weaver, Edward Cannon, M. M. Dance, Daniel Hall, Peyton Anderson, and William Compton.

Two faithful laborers had been called to their rest during the year. John T. Brame was a native of Caroline county. He was converted when only fourteen years old. In his twenty-third year he gave himself to the work of saving souls, and was received

on trial in the Conference. Five years completed his career as a preacher, but in that short period he made full proof of his ministry. Wherever he was sent he saw the pleasure of the Lord prospering in his hands. Many will rise in the last day rejoicing that they ever heard the word from his lips. "His preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom; but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that the faith of his hearers should not stand in wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

In the midst of his labors he was taken with bilious fever, and felt that his sickness was unto death. For several days before he died the enemy thrust sorely at him, but he continued in prayer whenever in his right mind. Amid the wanderings of delirium the voice of prayer never failed to recall him to the right use of his powers. While the brethren were bowed around his bed appealing to God for his dying servant, the light broke into his soul, and he rejoiced in hope of glory; thus he continued till the silver cord was loosed, and his spirit ascended to its place in the heavens. He died at the early age of twenty-seven.

George Burnett was born in Pittsylvania county. He, too, remembered his Creator in the days of his youth. Feeling that a dispensation of the gospel was committed to him, he offered himself to the Conference and was admitted on trial. He had travelled not quite three years when he was called to exchange the "cross of suffering for the crown of life." He was a good man, full of faith and the Holy Ghost.

The name of Moses Brock appears for the first time in the appointments of this Conference. Few men

are more vividly remembered in Virginia and North Carolina. For more than forty years he has been a man of mark in the Church. No man was ever more perfectly original in character; there never has been but one Moses Brock. His ability as a preacher was superior, (we speak of him in the time of his full power in the Conference,) but not always equally displayed. When the occasion called out all his strength he was forcible, eloquent, and eminently successful. Naturally witty, overflowing with humor, and often highly eccentric in manner and language, he has had to share more than half the odd sayings and doings in every Conference where he has labored. His power of satire was remarkable, and when employed to rebuke sin, or to let down a people who thought too highly of themselves, its strokes were sore and terrible. In the most quiet manner he would apply the lash till his victims literally writhed under the torture. His self-possession was almost perfect. Perhaps no man ever saw him thrown off his balance by any occurrence, however singular or startling in its nature. Calm, determined, sagacious and thoughtful, he was a noted man among preachers and people. He worked hard and long as an itinerant, first in the Virginia, then in the North Carolina, and lastly in the Memphis Conference. When he felt unable to do the full work of a travelling preacher, he declined to take an inefficient relation, but located and retired to the quiet and abundance of his country home. There the gray-haired veteran awaits his call to a seat in the heavens.*

*He has since entered into rest.

The name of Philip Courtney is the most noted among the local preachers raised to Elder's orders at this session. More than sixty years this venerable man has been a member of the Church at Richmond, and above fifty, a zealous and useful local preacher. He may be called the father of Methodism in the Capital of the State. He has moved on with it from those early days when the little class gathered for worship in the county Court-house to the present time. He has shared all her trials and her triumphs, and now, beyond the middle of the century, he can look around and say, Behold! What hath God wrought? In all these years he has been a ready and faithful workman. With a mind quick, vigorous, and original, a fine flow of spirits, and a memory well stored with incidents and anecdotes of the past, but few men have been more acceptable as preachers or more agreeable as companions. He has never worn out as a preacher; his sermons are fresh, spiritual, entertaining and instructive. And now, after half a century's service in the Richmond pulpits, Father Courtney is always heard with pleasure and profit. His mind is rich in reminiscences of the city, her progress, her churches of all denominations, and her great men, preachers, lawyers, politicians, editors and merchants. He has known them all, many of them intimately, and they are made to live and move and speak before you in his lively narratives He has been eminently useful in other fields. As a teacher he has accomplished a vast amount of good. For many years he was at the head of the Lancasterian School, and his faithful labors here have been amply repaid

in the high positions many of his scholars have reached in Richmond and other places. As President of the Virginia Bible Society he is widely and favorably known. In this position, which he has held for many years, his dignity, candor, intelligence and piety, have commanded the respect and confidence of all the leading men of the different churches engaged in this noble enterprise.

This useful and rare specimen of a man was brought into the work of the ministry by a singular incident. Being present at a Camp Meeting in Chesterfield county, the preacher having charge of the exercises insisted that he should preach. Having never spoken in public beyond a brief exhortation, he at once declined, stating that he had no license. The preacher would take no denial; preach he must. Thus forced to make the attempt, he mounted the stand with fear and trembling. In a faltering voice he announced his text. No sooner had the words fallen from his lips, than three young ladies fell from their seats, crying out in deep conviction. The exercises, thus suddenly interrupted, could not be resumed; the number of mourners increased every moment, and the young preacher left the pulpit to labor in the altar. The meeting went on with great power, and many souls were converted. The preacher stationed in the city now declared that Philip Courtney must have license to preach; that his call had been clearly proved by the conviction of three persons at the bare reading of his text. He was accordingly licensed at the ensuing Quarterly Meeting. His ministry, thus happily begun, has since gathered its seals in rich abundance. With

the cause of Sunday Schools he has been identified since the year 1817, when the first Sunday School was organized in Richmond. The Presbyterians began operations at the same time, under the leadership of the distinguished Dr. John H. Rice. The Baptists were requested to unite in the enterprise, but they declined to have anything to do with such schools. How happily different now is the policy of that denomination. The number gathered into this school was about forty. Previously it had been customary for the preacher to meet the children at the Church every Saturday for catechetical instruction. Up to the present time Father Courtney has been a faithful laborer in this cause. It is a beautiful sight to see the veteran of more than eighty years seated in the midst of his class, planting the seeds of life eternal in the hearts of the youthful listeners. To him such work is no drudgery; it is a labor of love.

He has, perhaps, officiated at more marriages and funerals than any other minister in the State. His matrimonial register shows a list of above twelve hundred couples for whom he has tied the silken cord; and often in the same family, the names of parents, children, and grand-children, are recorded as having received the service at his hands.

In his eighty-third year, a genial, affable, and kind-hearted old man, loving and beloved, he yet lingers on the shores of time, waiting in the full assurance of faith for the call to enter the mansions of the blessed.*

*He has since fallen asleep in Jesus.

On the first of May the third delegated General Conference convened at Baltimore. We shall give a brief summary of the acts of this body. The difficulties which had arisen between the American preachers and the missionaries of the British Conference in Canada, were adjusted by a division of the work between the two churches. The American Methodist Church taking charge of all the Societies in Upper, and the English of all in Lower Canada.

Certain regulations were adopted concerning the building and securing of houses of worship. The slavery question was warmly debated, but the only action taken was to rescind the grant of 1812 to the Annual Conferences, giving them the right to form their own regulations on the subject.

A very important change was made in respect to local preachers. Some dissatisfaction had been exhibited by many of this class because in the Quarterly Conferences they were not examined, licensed and tried exclusively by their peers. To meet their wishes the General Conference created "District Conferences," to be held in each Presiding Elder's district, and to be composed of all the local preachers within the same who had been licensed for two years. Of this body the Presiding Elder was to be President; in his absence the members were to elect a President from their own number. These Conferences were authorized to license proper persons to preach, to renew their licenses, to recommend candidates to the Annual Conferences for Deacon's or Elder's orders, in the local ranks, or for admission on trial in the travelling connection; and to try, suspend, expel or

acquit any local preacher against whom charges might be brought; but no man could be licensed without a recommendation from his Quarterly Conference. This new wheel in the machinery of Methodism appears not to have worked well, and it was allowed to drop out after sixteen years trial.

The great battle of this General Conference was fought over the Presiding Elder question. The conflict was long and severe. The strongest men of the Church were arrayed against each other, and strove in debate as if the most vital interests of Methodism were at stake. And this the contestants most firmly believed; the friends of the plan felt that the preachers should have a voice in the appointment of those who, in some sense governed them, and that the responsibility of appointing the laborers to their work should be shared equally by the Bishop and his council of Elders; the opponents of the plan contended that any such change in the economy of the Church would be fatal to Methodist Episcopacy and introduce an element of discord into the Annual Conferences.

After much fruitless discussion it was agreed to appoint a committee of six, three in favor of, and three against the plan, to consult with the Bishops and report to the Conference. They reported that whenever vacancies should occur in the office, the Bishop should nominate three times the number wanted, and the Conference elect by ballot without debate; where more than one was wanted, no more than three at a time should be nominated, nor more than one at a time elected. The Bishop had author-

ity to fill all vacancies occurring in the intervals of the Conferences.

It was further recommended that the Presiding Elders should be made the advisory council of the Bishop in stationing the preachers. The report was adopted by a vote of sixty-one to twenty-five, and ordered to be incorporated into the Discipline. This action was followed by unexpected results. Joshua Soule, who had been elected Bishop, declined to receive ordination and resigned the office. Bishop McKendree appeared before the Conference and avowed his conviction that they had acted in violation of the Constitution, and stated that his sense of duty would not allow him to give effect to the resolutions. His views were afterwards fully elaborated in an able address to the Annual Conferences. In this state of things the Southern and Western members endeavored to secure a reconsideration, but this the Northern members succeeded in preventing. As a last resort, Edward Cannon, of the Virginia delegation, offered a resolution suspending the rule until the next General Conference, and by his conciliatory manners and personal influence in conjunction with others, secured its passage. Thus the system of Methodism was saved from what might have been a fatal blow.

The Virginia Conference of 1821 began at the city of Raleigh on the 28th of February, Bishop George presiding. Nine were received on trial; two readmitted; one discontinued; four were superannuated; ten located; one had died; seven Deacons and three Elders were ordained; of local preachers, four were elected to Deacon's, and two to Elder's orders. The

only monies reported were from the Book Concern $300; from the Chartered Fund, $100. The membership within the limits of the Conference was 18,481 whites, 6,489 colored; the increase was about 1,200. The aggregate numbers in the State were 23,300 whites, and 5,156 blacks. There were 54 circuits in the State, supplied by 91 laborers; of these 6 were in the Kentucky, 4 in the Tennessee, 21 in the Virginia, 22 in the Baltimore, and one in the Philadelphia Conference.

One laborer, Archibald Robinson, a native of North Carolina, had ended his course during the year. He was awakened in his youth, and earnestly sought the pardon of his sins. On one occasion, while listening to the reading of the hymn, "Father I stretch my hands to thee," at family worship, he sunk on his knees and wrestled in prayer till his fetters were broken and his soul released. He finished his work in little more than two years, and died in great peace.

The name of Thomas Crowder appears this year in the Minutes. He was born in Wake county, N. C., in 1797. In 1819, while at school in Raleigh, he was converted, after having been a seeker for three years. Joyfully his young heart rested, after the long and weary struggle with sin, in peace with God through faith in Christ. He prosecuted the study of law to some extent, but he gave this up for the greater work of saving souls. For above thirty years he was an earnest and successful preacher. As a pastor he was excelled by none, as a disciplinarian he was strict but kind; in his preaching he was close, searching and practical. Without being eloquent in the

ordinary sense, his sermons were usually attended by such an unction of the Holy Ghost, and were delivered with such fervor as to give them a direct path to the hearts of his hearers. He was a man of great purity of character; his all was consecrated to the service of Christ, and he seemed to have ever in his mind the sentiment of the Christian poet:

> "Happy, if with my latest breath
> I may but gasp his name;
> Preach him to all, and cry in death,
> Behold, behold the Lamb?"

He gathered thousands of souls to his ministry, many of whom have crossed the flood and greeted him before the throne; and many still live who fondly cherish his memory and hope to hail him among the blessed. "They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

This was a fruitful year in some portions of the Conference. In the Neuse and Yadkin Districts there was a glorious revival. At a Camp Meeting in Granville, sixty were brought to God; at another in Haw River Circuit, seventy were converted; at a third, near Raleigh, about forty were saved from sin; at a fourth, on the Tar River Circuit, there was a great display of divine power. "On Sunday evening," says an eye-witness, "we had one of the most evident displays of the goodness of God, that I recollect ever to have seen. For about three hours there was such an awful sense of his sacred presence that both preachers and people were 'lost in wonder, love and praise.'

Some were induced to think they had received the blessing of sanctification. When the exercises closed on Monday, we found that about forty souls had been born of the Spirit during this solemn meeting." At two other similar meetings about ninety were converted. At Hillsboro a meeting of great power was held. On the evening of Sunday, "such was the manifestation of the power and goodness of God that perhaps thirty were prostrated to the floor under an overwhelming sense of his presence, most of whom were earnestly seeking mercy in the name of Jesus. Such a scene was never before witnessed in that place, and the most impenitent seemed awed into reverence." At these, and other meetings, between three and four hundred souls were happily converted, and most of them gathered into the Church.

In Surry, Isle of Wight, and Prince George counties, there was an interesting work. At Laurel Spring meeting house the revival broke out at a quarterly meeting, and spread rapidly to other places, until nearly one hundred were converted.

At a camp-meeting in Isle of Wight the Spirit descended in great power, and the praise of God burst from the lips of many who had been strangers to his name; one hundred and fifty were here born from above! At a similar meeting in Prince George about one hundred professed saving faith in Christ.

In the Fall of the year a powerful revival broke out in Lynchburg, under the preaching of G. W. Charlton. An account of this work was furnished for the *Methodist Magazine* by Rev. John Early. "The winter is past," he writes, "the rain is over

and gone," and the voice of singing is not only heard in our Church, but in love-feasts, our prayer meetings, our class meetings, in private houses, and in places and families where the songs of Zion were never heard before.

The forebodings of this work had been seen and felt for several weeks before the last of October, when the first public manifestation of God's love was made in the conversion of souls; after which the greatest excitement was seen ever before witnessed in this place. All classes of citizens attended to witness for themselves; the Church was crowded—prayer meetings at private houses were overflowing; and for several weeks they scarcely had a meeting (and they had them every night) without a gracious outpouring of the Spirit in the conviction and conversion of souls. The aged and the young, the most respectable and the most obscure of both sexes, have been the subjects of this work. The females, however, have in this revival been more generally impressed than ever witnessed in the place before. Nearly all who have professed to experience religion joined us forthwith. At one time I baptized fifteen adults, and at another ten, besides a number that had been baptized by Brother Charlton, the stationed preacher. Some of the wicked say that the preachers and people are deranged, and some professors join them against us; but glory be to God in the highest! our trust is in him. I do not recollect ever to have been in a revival where the people were so decent and respectful as they were in Lynchburg. We have added upwards of one hundred to our Church in this revival, and I

hope that the gracious visitations will be continued among us for many days.

The principal agent in this revival is George W. Charlton, the stationed preacher, whose faithful and laborious services will never be forgotten by the present inhabitants of Lynchburg. At present our people appear to be of one heart and one mind. Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! May peace and good will rule our hearts forever.

We have also had abundant reason for humility, gratitude and thanksgiving in Bedford circuit; numbers have been radically changed by Divine grace, and our prospects are yet blooming for better and more abundant fruits!

The Conference of 1822 met at New Berne, N. C., on the 20th of March. Bishops McKendree and George were present; seven were admitted on probation; two were reädmitted; two were dropped; one was returned supernumerary; four were superannuated; six located; seven were admitted into full connection, and ordained Deacons; nine were elected and ordained Elders; nine local preachers were elected to Deacons, and nine to Elders' orders. The sum of three hundred was drawn from the Book Concern, and one hundred from the Chartered Fund. No record of circuit collections. The members were reported at 19,329 whites and 6,625 colored, showing an increase of nearly 1,000. The entire membership in Virginia was 25,742 whites and 6,725 blacks; the aggregate increase was 3,000. The circuits numbered 54, supplied by 96 preachers.

This Conference took a decided stand in opposition to the action of the General Conference on the Presiding Elder question. The whole subject was presented in the following address of Bishop McKendree to the Conference. This important and able document we have never seen in print.

"*To the Annual Conferences of the M. E. Church:*

"DEAR BRETHREN: The sacred trust confided to us, and a sense of the high responsibility it involves, brings me to address you on the subject of the long protracted controversy respecting the power of our Superintendents. A controversy this, of peculiar interest to you, and one that you only can direct to a proper issue.

"For many years a respectable minority of our General Conference had laboured to produce a change in our form of government. This they would effect by transferring from the Bishops to the Annual Conference *the right to appoint the Presiding Elders*, and then committing to the Presiding Elders *the power to station the preachers*. Such a change your Superintendent believes would go to subvert our present form of government. Because, 1st. To transfer the executive authority from the Bishops to the Annual Conferences would be to do away that form of Episcopacy and Itinerant General Superintendency which is recognized in our Discipline and confirmed by the third article of the Constitution. 2nd. By doing away our present effective General Superintendency the itinerancy throughout would be much injured, if not entirely destroyed. 3rd. The contemplated change, by infringing that particular restriction which guards

the Episcopacy, must also subject the whole Constitution of the Church to the will of the General Conference, and so divest the members of the Church of the only legal security of their rights.

"1st. That the proposed change would transfer the executive authority from the Bishops to the Annual Conferences, and thereby do away that form of Episcopacy, and Itinerant General Superintendency which is recognized in the Discipline will appear by examining into the duties of the Episcopacy, as defined in the Discipline and exemplified in the Government.

"According to the Form of Discipline, it is the duty of the Bishops to travel through the connection at large, to oversee the spiritual and temporal interests of the Church. But 'to oversee' implies the power to *direct*, to *manage* the business of this oversight. In order, therefore, to qualify the Bishops to oversee the important business committed to their charge, and to carry our system into full effect, they are authorized 'to preside in the Conferences; to fix the appointments of the preachers for the several circuits; to form the districts and choose Presiding Elders: and, in the intervals of the Conferences, to change, receive and suspend preachers, as necessity may require and the Discipline direct.' And, in order to secure a faithful performance of their duty, and at the same time to guard against an abuse of power, the Bishops are obliged to act in strict conformity to rules formed by the preachers,—to whom they are accountable for their administration, and by whom they may be expelled for improper conduct.

"In the appointment of preachers, those who are to

have the charge of circuits, districts, &c., are selected; and, by virtue of their appointment, are fully invested with authority to discharge the duties of their several offices. And, in the event of their having neglected their duty as pointed out in the Discipline, it is required of the Superintendent (after suitable admonition) to remove these improper officers and to appoint such as will attend to the duties assigned them.

"By employing preachers during the interval of Conferences, and making such changes from district to district, and from Conference to Conference, as the state of our work may require, the General Superintendents are able to enlarge the field of our missionary labours and provide instruction for the destitute. In this way uniformity in administration is preserved throughout the Conferences, errors are readily corrected, and the rules and regulations of the General Conference carried into effect, while the whole administration, in every part of the work, through the responsibility of the General Superintendents, is brought under the inspection and control of the General Conference.

"Thus qualified for the work, it is the Bishops reasonable duty to travel through the connection at large, to oversee the spiritual and temporal business of the Church. And it is equally reasonable and just that they be responsible to the General Conference for the faithful performance of their duty.

"From this view of our government, it evidently follows that the power of appointing the preachers, and especially the Presiding Elders, is of vital importance to our General Superintendency. Without this

they could not 'oversee the business of the Church.' The Presiding Elders, within the limits of their several districts, are invested with all the powers of Superintendents—the right to ordain only excepted—and, but for their being subject to the control of the Bishops, might counteract their measures and render their superintendency a mere name. At present the Presiding Elders are under obligations to attend to the instructions of the General Superintendents, but were the proposed change adopted, these obligations would be transferred to the Annual Conferences, and the Presiding Elders made as independent of the Bishops as now they are of the Conferences. Thus independent, each one of them possessing in his district the same authority with an absent Bishop, to what purpose should the Bishop travel through the connection at large? Could it be expected of them to travel six thousand miles yearly only to see abuses which they could not correct?—the instructions of different Conferences varying—the Presiding Elders administering differently—and perhaps the economy of the Church as variously interpreted as there might be opinions of proper discipline? Now, if the proposed change would render it impracticable to the Bishops to discharge the duties of their superintendency, then the inference is plain that our 'Episcopacy and Itinerant General Superintendency' must be destroyed.

"But the duties of the Itinerant General Superintendency consist in 'the overseeing the temporal and spiritual business of the Church,' which we have seen they cannot do unless it be allowed them to control

the Presiding Elders and the preachers in charge—the more immediate agents in 'the business' they are required 'to oversee.' But the change we are considering would remove these from under the control of the Bishops, therefore this proposed change would destroy the Itinerant General Superintendency.

"2nd. By doing away our present effective General Superintendency, the itinerancy throughout would be much injured, if not entirely destroyed.

"Under different circumstances, that the itinerancy might be different, modified, and equally succeed, is fully admitted. Could all travelling preachers attend in our Annual Conferences to account for their administration and receive their appointments and instructions, the itinerancy in America and England might prosper, equally independent of a General Superintendency or a General Conference. But our situation is widely different from theirs. Our work extends beyond twenty-four States; and besides, its mere extension subjects us to many inconveniences arising out of the various civil regulations of different States and Territories. Those are all equal in power and independent of each other, no one claiming a right to direct another. The jurisdiction of each Annual Conference is restricted within its own limits, and each Presiding Elder to his own district.

"Out of this disposition of the Church arises the necessity of a General Conference to legislate for the united Annual Conferences, and for a General Superintendency to enforce the acts of the Conference—to preserve an uniform administration of Discipline—to maintain the harmony of the Annual Conferences

—and by removing preachers from district to district, and from Conference to Conference, (acts which no Annual Conference, nor Presiding Elder can do), to perpetuate and extend our missionary labors throughout the Continent. To divest the Church, therefore, of the Itinerant General Superintendency, would be to take from the General Conference that energy by which its laws are enforced—to confuse the administration of Discipline—to weaken the union of the Annual Conferences, and to injure the work at large. To whom could the General Conference look to carry their laws into effect? Not to the Presiding Elders, for they are amenable to the Annual Conferences; not to the Annual Conferences, for they cannot be identified before a General Conference; and not to the Bishops, (if indeed it were possible to preserve the name without the functions of the office—or if there can be Bishops without superintending authority) they can have no control over agents whom they do not appoint, and who may be maintained in office independent of their will. And as there would be wanting an adequate authority to execute the laws of the General Conference under its immediate cognizance, so the absence of that authority must render each Annual Conference supreme, and leave the administration of Discipline to the uncertain, varying convenience of their separate circumstances.

"Such a state of things might result in division. But, even if it should not, who could make local convenience submit to the general good? Who could employ the strength of one Conference to aid another?

or who could send the preachers beyond the Conference limits?

"Forasmuch, then, as the due enforcement of the laws of the General Conference—the maintaining of a uniform administration of discipline—the harmony of the Conferences, their union, and extending the work in general, are all so intimately connected with our form of Episcopacy and Itinerant General Superintendency, I conclude that by doing away our Episcopacy the itinerancy throughout would be much injured, if not entirely destroyed.

"3rd. The contemplated change, by infringing that particular restriction which guards the Episcopacy, must also subject the whole Constitution of the Church to the will of the General Conference, and so divest the members of the Church of the only legal security of their rights.

"Before the Constitution was adopted the General Conference, *composed of all the travelling preachers in the connection,* held unlimited powers; and at every sitting of the Conference the whole economy of the Church—not excepting the articles of religion, our doctrines, and our discipline,—was subject to their authority and liable to change. Of this state of things serious consequences were apprehended, and the preachers who composed the Conference of 1808, fully possessed of all the powers of the Conference of 1784, (which organized the Church), came together expecting to establish a delegated General Conference. This was done, and the delegated General Conference authorized to legislate for the Church under certain 'limitations and restrictions.' By these the articles

of religion and the doctrines of the Church, her Episcopal form of government, her terms of communion, the right of preachers and people of trial by committee and of an appeal, and the proper use of the funds of the Church, are put beyond the powers of the General Conference. On other subjects the Conference may legislate, but these are positively interdicted, unless upon the joint recommendation of all the Annual Conferences.

"Nor is there any variety in the force of these restrictions; no one is more binding than the rest. They are of equal authority, and equally forbid the intermeddling of the Conference. Now the proposed change interferes with one of these restrictions; it does away our form of Episcopacy and destroys 'the plan of our Itinerant General Superintendency.' But if the several restrictions held in the Constitution be of equal obligation upon the General Conference, and the General Conference, nevertheless, do act in contradiction of one of them, so as to do what the Constitution forbids being done, then the General Conference may also violate any other restriction of the Constitution and make themselves wholly independent of it.

"If 'the plan of our Itinerant General Superintendency' may be destroyed our articles of religion may also be changed, the rules of the united societies may be revoked, the funds of the Church may be appropriated unlawfully, and so of the rest. Therefore, the contemplated change would subject the whole Constitution of the Church to the will of the General

Conference, and by so doing divest the members of the Church of the only security of their rights.

"At the last sitting of the General Conference the long protracted controversy concerning the powers of the Superintendents was brought to an eventful crisis. Very probably, however, it had ended as formerly but for the introduction of what was thought to be an accommodating resolution. This led to the following resolutions of the Conference:

"'1. Whenever in any Annual Conference there shall be a vacancy, or vacancies, in the office of Presiding Elder,—in consequence of the period of service of four years having expired, or the Bishops wishing to remove any Presiding Elder, or by death, resignation, or otherwise,—the Bishops or President of the Conference having ascertained the number wanted from any of these causes, shall nominate three times the number, out of which the Conference shall elect by ballot, without debate, the number wanted. Provided there is more than one wanted, not more than three at a time shall be nominated, nor more than one at a time elected. Provided, also, that in case of any vacancy or vacancies in the office of Presiding Elder in the interval of Conference, the Bishop shall have authority to fill said vacancy or vacancies until the ensuing Conference.

"'2. The Presiding Elders be, and hereby are, made the advisory council of the Bishop or President of the Conference in stationing the preachers.'

"These resolutions, under the impression that they would reconcile former differences and harmonize the Conferences, were passed by a majority of more than

two-thirds of the General Conference. Afterwards, however, many were convinced that the resolutions were unconstitutional, and suspended their operation for four years. The history of the last General Conference has informed you of how great importance your Superintendent regarded this subject. The very painful task of appearing before the Conference to avow his conviction of their having acted against the Constitution, and his sense of duty not to give effect to resolutions that were unconstitutional, could not have been urged upon him by anything less than a full belief that these resolutions were of the most harmful tendency. He regarded them—and he still regards them—not justified upon the bare argument of their probable good or bad effects, but of this without reference to the Constitution, he would have said nothing. He objected against them (and but for their suspension that objection might have gone into an appeal to the Annual Conferences) upon the ground of their being in violation of the Constitution. After what has been said of the indispensable necessity of the Constitution to preserve the itinerancy and maintain the most essential rights of both the preachers and the people, you will not suppose that I attach to it too great importance, nor will you hastily pass over what would infringe it.

"We have seen that the transferring the executive authority from the Bishop to the Annual Conferences would do away the Episcopacy and Itinerant General Superintendency. And, having considered the direct effect of such a change upon our whole economy, I need not repeat to you how indispensable it is to the

preservation of the Itinerant General Superintendency that the Superintendents be able to control the Presiding Elders; that if the Presiding Elder be rendered independent of the Superintendents—and in the same measure that they became so—their ability must be enfeebled and the executive authority transferred. What if the suspended resolutions but divide the control of the Presiding Elders with the Bishops and the Conferences? Do they not so far remove the Presiding Elders from under the control of the Bishops? And, if the placing them under the control of the Conferences exclusively would involve the destruction of our General Superintendency, what does the division effect? Must it not, at least, injure the Supertendency?

"But, further, the parts ascertained in the resolutions and divided to the Bishop and the Conference, in constituting the Presiding Elders, are so unequal as to fix no obligation on the elected Elder, except to the Conference only. Nor can the Bishop tell, until the Conference shall have decided for him, how much his prerogative may accomplish, whether anything or nothing. The Bishop may nominate three persons, but who of them is indebted for his preference? Two of these he *cannot* prefer; they are named only of necessity; and they *all* have two reasons to one for suffering each to be himself of the non-elect. But the election of the Conference fixes upon *one* their exclusive preference, and enlists a sense of obligation to prefer the Conference in return;—to please them rather than obey the Bishop whenever both these cannot be done.

"Again, if the Presiding Elders are executive officers (and this none will deny, seeing that in their districts they are charged with the very duties of Superintendents) by whom is the authority conferred? Do the Bishops appoint them? no more than they do twice a greater number of persons, whom certainly they do not prefer, and who may never be Presiding Elders. What executive authority then can any one receive by the Bishop's nomination? Which one of the peculiar duties of the Presiding Elder's office can a barely nominated person execute? But which may not the elected elder do? However the resolutions may seem to divide the constituting a Presiding Elder, *the Conference alone holds his obligations, the Conference alone confers his authority.*

"Now, it has been proved by our first argument that to transfer the executive authority from the Bishops to the Annual Conferences would destroy our Itinerant General Superintendency. And in the argument it is shown that the work for which the General Superintendency was constituted cannot be done—the Bishops cannot "oversee the temporal and spiritual business of the Church," unless the immediate agents in that business are put under their control. But the suspended resolutions would transfer to the Annual Conferences so much of the executive authority as belongs to the office of Presiding Elder. These Presiding Elders, possessing in their districts like authority with the Bishops, number them as seventy to three; so that without the further influence given to the Presiding Elders by the second resolution, the first alone confides to the Annual Confer-

ences *seventy of seventy-three parts of the whole executive authority of the Church.* And thereby the Presiding Elders would share with the Bishops in the Superintendency as seventy to three. I say *would share by their Presiding Elders with the Bishops in the Superintendency;* for the Presiding Elders, as we have seen, would be authorized by the Conferences, and not by the Bishops, and would be under obligation to those, not to them.

"And if it be thought that so large a transfer of the executive authority does not destroy our Itinerant General Superintendency, I ask, how much more might be destroyed? Surely not more than *three* of *seventy-three parts;* seventy of which are already in the resolutions.

"But if the delegated Conference can go so far, what shall hinder them farther? If they may confer it on the Annual Conferences to elect *one* of *three*, why may not the election be made without a nomination? Why not the Conference be made to elect the preachers in charge of circuits? or why not this and all the rest, put under the management of a committee? If any one instance of 'the Bishop's duty' can be alienated by the General Conference, why not every one? They may say, he shall not nominate, as easily as they now say, he shall do no more. They may say he shall take no part in stationing the preachers, as rightfully as they now say, he shall not station them without advice,—all this, and more; they may say, he shall not preside in the Conferences, he shall neither change, receive, nor suspend preachers as constitutionally as now they say what they do.

But where, then, would be 'the plan of our Itinerant General Superintendency?" Alas! where is it now! Do not all these and other instances of Episcopal duty make up that '*plan?*' Are they not all distinctly stated in the Discipline? What marks distinguish those particular instances of the Bishop's duty which *alone* may be identified with '*the plan*' of our Itinerant General Superintendency? Which one of them all can claim to be preserved by the Constitution? If any *one*, more than *others*, it should be *that* which has been first wrested from the Constitution. But '*the plan*' embraces them all—the Constitution guarantees the perpetutiy of that 'plan,' and the resolutions of the last General Conference are in violation of the Constitution. But by the vote of the Conference we infer that the resolutions were thought to be at least prudentially necessary. To this expression of the mind of the Conference all due deference should be paid. Your Superintendent would offer much for peace; the quiet of the Church deserves much. And if, after maturely weighing the resolutions, and their probable effects upon the Government, you believe the present state of things requires them, I would advise you to take measures by which they may be constitutionally introduced—if practicable.

"I submit the whole case to your discretion. And may God, who giveth wisdom, direct you and bless you, and sanctify your deliberations to the Church and the glory of his name."

W. McKENDREE.

This address was referred to an able committee.

They reported the following resolutions, which were adopted by the Conference:

"Whereas, Bishop McKendree has addressed us on the subject of two resolutions, passed at the last General Conference, relative to the appointing of Presiding Elders, which were suspended until the ensuing General Conference; therefore,

"*Resolved*, 1. That in our mature judgment the said resolutions are contrary to the 3rd Article of the Constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which declares that the General Conference 'shall not destroy the *plan* of our Itinerant General Superintendency.'

"*Resolved*, 2. That in our opinion the two resolutions passed at the General Conference of 1820 (relative to the appointing Presiding Elders,) cannot be considered as rules of the Methodist Episcopal Church, until, by the joint recommendation of all the Annual Conferences, and then by the majority of two-thirds of the General Conference, the third Article of the Constitution be amended.

"*Resolved*, 3. That Bishop McKendree be respectfully requested to leave a copy of the Address with the Conference.

Resolved, 4. That the further consideration of this subject be postponed for the present."

JOHN EARLY, *Chairman.*

At this session "a committee was appointed to point out a course of reading and study, and to examine the candidates for admission into full connection, and for the ministry."

We find the following record, and give it as one specimen, out of many of the same kind found in the

Journal: "Joshua Leigh, of Gloucester, was received on trial with the express understanding that the Presiding Elder of the James River District bring a proper recommendation to the next Annual Conference."

"Jesse Lee's Manuscript Journals were committed to Peyton Anderson, with instructions to employ, if possible, the agents of the Methodist Book Concern to collect from them and publish, such materials as would be by them regarded most prudential, with the understanding that if the work is published by and for the benefit of the Concern, the Agents must pay the Virginia Conference $150, to satisfy services rendered them by Mr. Thrift."

We believe the Journals have never been published.

The year following this Conference was one of great prosperity to the churches in Virginia. In almost every part of the State the Spirit was poured out with great power. Many Societies that had lingered for years in a lukewarm condition, were quickened into new life and vigor. In Suffolk Circuit, under the ministry of Rev. Allen Bernard, a great revival broke out, and Methodism gained an influence which it has maintained to the present time.

"Previous to this year," says the above named minister, "the preacher had preached in Suffolk only on the week day. Occasionally Brother Cox, a local preacher, gave them a sermon on the Sabbath. The meeting house was free for all who desired to use it, Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, or O'Kelleyites. I determined to try a Sabbath appointment in the place. We had a class of about seventeen white,

and the same number of colored members. In November of this year a District Conference was held in the town, at which we had a number of local preachers from all parts of the District. During the session we had preaching at the free church, and a revival commenced; first at a private house. One of the gayest ladies of the place fell under conviction one evening after family worship. As I rose from my knees, after the prayer, I began to sing; the lady was weeping, and her husband was deeply serious; after another prayer, and while I was singing, she fell prostrate on the floor crying for mercy. In a short time she found peace and was happy in the love of God. The news spread, and soon the room was full of people arrayed to see Mrs. H., so recently the votary of fashion, now praising God, and exhorting her friends to seek religion. The next day she was at the Church still happy and zealous for God. How earnestly she talked to her friends and acquaintances, and with what wonderful success! The work broke out, one after another was converted, and religion revived gloriously among professors, while many were brought from the ranks of Satan to serve the Lord and rejoice in the hope of heaven.

This may be said to be the first revival *in Suffolk*, for although the Camp Meeting, held at Smith's Mill, near the town, in 1803, numbered more converts by far, yet they were from different parts of the District, and but few from Suffolk. The Church, however, received several important additions from that meeting, but Methodism seems not to have taken hold on the community as it did after this revival. The old

church was far too small to contain our congregations, and we resolved to build a larger one, which was accomplished after encountering much opposition. In the establishment of religion in the Methodist Episcopal Church, in Suffolk, the following brethren and friends were prominent, viz: Robert Cox, a local Elder; James McGuire, John Parker, and Thomas Wills, members of the Church; and Captain Mills Riddick, and his brother Joseph Riddick, both of whom contributed liberally to the building of the new Church."

In the south-western portion of the State, embraced in the Holston Districts of the Tennessee Conference, the work of revival was great and glorious. At a series of Camp, and other meetings, held on New River, Clinch, and Abingdon Circuits, nearly one thousand souls were converted. The preachers, full of faith and zeal, on these occasions had "happy opportunities of addressing hundreds whose hearts seemed to be sealed against the truth; of combatting the powers of darkness, the superstitions of the day, and the march of infidelity; of arousing the fears of the impenitent, establishing the hopes of the believer; of warning the prodigal to return, the backslider to repent, and the lukewarm to fear. At these meetings hundreds were wounded by the energetic influences of the Holy Spirit. Many of the young and old, the rich and poor, and indeed of almost every rank and condition, found themselves before the 'Most High,' and experienced the gospel to be 'the power of God unto salvation.'"

One of the good fruits of this work was the erec-

tion of a church in the town of Abingdon, "the first ever built in or near that place for the use of the Methodists."

It is worthy of remark that the members of the church were, in a great measure, prepared for this gracious visitation by the exercise of discipline with mildness, but strictness on the part of the preachers. Thus the "hearts of very many were prepared for the holy exercise of their respective gifts and graces in the vineyard of Christ."

Meherrin District, in the Virginia Conference, was the scene of a general revival. In a letter, published in the *Methodist Magazine*, Rev. John Early, the Presiding Elder, gives a glowing account of this work. He writes:

"Jehovah has visited this District in great mercy. At a camp-meeting held in Buckingham circuit, in the last of August, we had about forty converted. At another (Limestone Springs) in Bedford circuit, the week after, much good was done; about sixty professed justifying grace; forty joined us forthwith, and many immediately after. The camp-meeting in Amelia circuit commenced the last week in September; though we began the day of the great storm, under clouded circumstances, and not a minister present except the circuit preacher and myself, the sky became serene the next day, other laborers came to the help of the Lord against the mighty, and it was a memorable time; about forty were converted. At another meeting, the week following, about sixty miles distant in Mecklenburg, we had a very great time; sixty or seventy professed pardon through Je-

sus Christ, and among this number three past the meridian of life, though, like vessels forced to land by shipwreck, came in at the eleventh hour, and shouted victory over their fell foe; about fifty joined the church.

"Indeed, it is a time of unction generally. In Greensville and Brunswick circuit, and particularly in Greensville county, where my heart bled to see iniquity abound, and the love of many wax cold, for the sake of the few who had not defiled their garments, the Lord has visited them by his Spirit, and numbers have been happily converted. In Chesterfield circuit, where we have seen affliction, the work has begun; I am told that in ten days, beginning at our last Quarterly Meeting at Bold Spring, about twenty professed conversion in Cumberland county. The flame is now spreading in Buckingham and Amelia. In Bedford many are happily converted, and a large number have joined the Society. In Lynchburg our cause prospers; several professed religion last Sunday night."

During the progress of this work, especially in Chesterfield, it is said that "persons have been known to eat their breakfast by candle light that they might be in time to hear the glorious tidings of salvation." In the midst of so great anxiety to hear the gospel, the Lord was glorified in the conviction of sinners, the conversion of penitents, and in the sanctification of believers.

The greatest revival in this District broke out in Petersburg. The preacher was Hezekiah G. Leigh, then in the full flush of youthful zeal. The first signs

of the work appeared among the Presbyterians, under the labors of Rev. Benjamin H. Rice and Rev. Mr. Lockwood. In the early part of the Spring several young men of the Methodist Church began a prayer meeting in a counting-room east of Market Square, occupied by William Brownly. The Divine blessing attended the efforts of these zealous young Christians; many became deeply affected, several were converted. From this little meeting, as a center, the work spread with increasing power. At length it broke out in the great congregation. The whole Church was quickened, and came up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Leigh was in his place as the leader of the host; he was abundant in labors, preaching the word with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven. The work went on for three months. Prayer meetings were held daily in the church, and in private houses; people of all ages and all social grades confessed the power of God. A feeling of solemn awe pervaded the town; no class was exempt from the impressions of the truth. Business was to a great extent suspended, and men began to cast up the sum presented in the startling question, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Infidels and scoffers were struck dumb by the wonderful displays of Divine grace. Many who had never read the Bible, but to cavil at it, now searched it like the Bereans. People were converted everywhere—at home reading the Bible, in their closets at prayer, in their counting-rooms, and along the streets. One man, while sitting on a keg of nails in his store, was struck down with conviction, then prayed, and was forgiven; an-

other was joyfully converted while reading Fletcher's Appeal to earnest seekers of salvation ; a third while waiting on his customers, gave his heart to God, shouted his praise, then fell dead, and went to heaven.

In this revival the Methodists and Presbyterians labored together in Christian harmony,—there was no jealousy, no rivalry—all improper feelings were held in abeyance by the great desire to save souls from death. The Presbyterians gathered into their fold nearly one hundred of the converts ; the Methodists above two hundred, most of whom stood fast in the faith, and became zealous, liberal and devoted members of the Church of Christ. This work marks the era of a great moral revolution in Petersburg.

In Lynchburg the work so happily begun the past year continued its progress under the zealous labors of Rev. G. W. Charlton. During the two years of his pastorate the foundations of Methodism were firmly laid. Among the names of the converts are many who, to this day, form the main strength of the church in that city. The preacher, as the leader in this good work, was made the subject of a merciless persecution, but he held on his way with boldness and zeal, and finally triumphed over all his enemies.

The Conference of 1823 met at Lynchburg, on the 19th of March. Bishops McKendree and George presided. The number admitted on trial was thirteen ; one was readmitted ; one was returned supernumerary ; five were on the superannuated list ; one had withdrawn ; five located ; five were elected to Deacons, and five to Elders orders ; six local preachers were admitted to the office of Deacon, five to that of

Elder. The only funds reported were $300 from the Book Concern, and $120 from the Chartered Fund. The white membership within the Conference bounds was reported at 19,931, the colored at 5,962, showing a slight decrease. The aggregate membership in the State was 25,874 whites and 5,179 colored; there was a gain of little more than 100 whites, but a loss of above 500 blacks. The number of circuits in the State remained the same, fifty-four, supplied by ninety-seven laborers.

The Conference again considered the suspended resolutions, and passed the following:

"*Resolved*, That the Virginia Annual Conference authorize the passing at the next General Conference of the Suspended Resolutions of the last General Conference, in relation to the appointment of Presiding Elders, and of stationing the preachers, provided it shall pass by a majority of two-thirds of the General Conference."

Of the thirteen young men received on trial at this session, the name of but one remains on the Conference list. John Kerr, after forty years' service, yet remains among us, a man of purity, fidelity and faith, passing the evening of a well spent life amid the quiet pleasures of his family circle.*

A name appears on the Minutes this year with which a sad interest is connected. William Hammet took his place in the Virginia Conference, by transfer from Tennessee. He was a native of Ireland, came to this country in his youth, and was converted in one

*This good man has since peacefully closed his useful life.

of the western counties of this State, embraced at that time in the Tennessee Conference. He soon felt the movings of the Holy Spirit in reference to the ministry, and in the ardor of his nature gave himself fully to the work. Nature had made him an orator—she lavished her gifts upon him. His person, his face, his voice, his manner, all conspired to make him a favorite. To the natural fluency of his nation he joined a vivacity that gave additional charms to his ministrations. With but little mental training, he rose rapidly to a high position as a preacher. Crowds attended his services, and hung upon his words with wonder and delight. Perhaps no man better understood the art of pleasing his hearers, and yet, when the occasion demanded it, no man could excel him in cutting rebuke and withering sarcasm.

Many preachers in the Conference were his superiors in theological knowledge, and in the breadth and weight of pulpit thought, but few, if any, equalled him in that persuasive eloquence which charmed while it convinced his audience. Ten years, of eminently successful service, he gave to the work in Virginia. He planned and built churches, conducted revivals, and begged money for every good cause with untiring energy and merited success.

Old Trinity Church, in Richmond, was a monument of his industry and zeal.

It is sad to chronicle the fall of such a man from the high office of an ambassador for Christ. A cloud rests on the later life of this man, which reflects scarcely a ray of light. The melancholy narrative is soon told. With a mind highly endowed, but keenly

alive to a popular applause, he became a spoiled favorite. After a brilliant career in Virginia, he asked and obtained of the Conference, permission to visit his native land, where he spent two or more years. On his return, he located, and served as chaplain, we believe, at the University of Virginia, and afterwards to the Congress at Washington. He next studied medicine at Philadelphia, and soon after removed to Mississippi, where he married a lady of position and fortune. For several years he retained his place as a local minister in the Church; he, however, preached but seldom, and gradually lost the spirit of his mission. He became a lover of the world, gay, fashionable and popular. Politics claimed his attention and excited his ambition. He was elected to Congress, and served one term without any particular distinction as an orator or a statesman. Living in the midst of wealth, he dispensed an elegant hospitality, to which his graceful manners, his ready wit, and his agreeable conversation, gave still greater attraction. He quaffed the full chalice of worldly pleasure as if he had never tasted the "cup of salvation." But his door was not closed against the heralds of the cross. The Methodist preachers found a welcome and pleasant home beneath his roof, and the only shadow that rested upon their hearts was in the mournful contrast between the once humble, prayerful, and zealous preacher of the gospel, and the now proud, prayerless, and devoted man of the world. It is said that his life was closed by a lingering disease, and that during the many weary months through which he slowly approached the grave, he became

solemnly re-impressed with the truths of religion, and daily read the Scriptures. Let us hope that the wanderer came back to the house of his Father and again received the seal of his love. An incident occurred in the city of Richmond, which, in the order of Providence, may have been connected with his return to the forsaken fountain of living water.

The last service ever held in the old Trinity Church was a love feast, to which all who felt peculiarly attached to that honored house were invited. A goodly number was present worshipping together for the last time on the spot where William Hammet had laboured to build a house for God. The meeting was one of great interest, God was in the midst of his people, and their hearts were warmed by his presence. Near the close of the exercises a speaker arose and stated that they were gathered for the last time in a house built by the labors of a man once highly honored and greatly beloved as a minister of Christ; that for many years that man had cast away the faith he once preached, and while they rejoiced in the gospel of which he was once a flaming herald, he was now without its comfort and under its curse. In conclusion, he proposed that there and then special prayer should be made for his recovery and salvation. With full hearts and tearful eyes the proposal was responded to, and before God the company bowed, and on the arms of their faith lifted the fallen pastor to the throne of God for mercy and pardon.

The revival scenes which last year enlivened the mountains and valleys of Southwestern Virginia were this year repeated with increasing power and success.

The work was general throughout the District, but particular sections were largely blessed with the visitations of the Spirit. In Abingdon circuit there was hardly a neighborhood which did not prove the gospel to be "the power of God unto salvation." At a love-feast held, in the town of Abingdon, there were scenes over which the angels rejoiced. Not less than two hundred persons attended this, to many of them, singular meeting, one half of whom were strangers to religion. During the exercises "the simple and eloquent manner with which many testified the great things that God had done for them seemed entirely irresistible. The flame of love was soon kindled into rapturous joy in the hearts of the saints, while floods of tears involuntarily burst from the eyes of those who had been brought thither by idle curiosity, or had been induced to come with a desire to know the nature of our economy and to profit by our meeting." The revival received a fresh impulse from this real love-feast. More than six hundred souls were added to the church during the year. In Lee, New River, and other circuits lying partly in Tennessee and Virginia, the work was general and powerful. "The wilderness and the solitary places were made glad, and the desert rejoiced and blossomed as the rose." The summing up for the year showed a gain on the District of seventeen hundred members.

The Virginia Conference was called this year to mourn the loss of one of the most beloved and useful ministers of the Church. Rev. Peyton Anderson closed his useful life after a brief illness, in the county of Culpeper. He was born in Chesterfield county, of

parents who trained him to know the Lord from his childhood. In his nineteenth year he entered the travelling ministry, and soon gave indications of that ability and zeal which so brightly illustrated his brief career of usefulness. He seemed at all times to be deeply impressed with the great responsibilities of the ministerial office; and in the pulpit and in the social circle the seriousness of his manner bespoke the sincerity of his heart. With a clear, discriminating mind, deep solemnity, ready command of appropriate language, and great fervor of spirit, it is not surprising that he soon became a most effective and successful preacher of the gospel. Though young in Christian experience, he had passed through severe struggles, and learned patience by the things he had endured, he was therefore eminently qualified to administer consolation to feeble and doubting disciples. He was full of benevolence, and ardently desired that all men might share in the blessings of redemption. The cause of missions found in him a warm friend and an able advocate. He earnestly recommended this noble enterprise to the people of his charge, and by his personal influence and the force of example, stirred them up to greater liberality. In the last illness of this good man the graces of religion shone with a peculiar lustre. While groups of sorrowing friends stood round his bed watching the last conflict, he turned his eyes upon them, and exclaimed in the full hope of the gospel he had preached from his boyhood: "Farewell, brethren. When we meet again it will be in heaven."

CHAPTER XVI.

Conference of 1824—Revivals—General Conference of 1824—Lay Delegation and other measures—Virginia Conference of 1825—Incipient movements for a College—Colonization and Missionary Societies—Great work of Grace in Hanover Circuit, Greensville, and other places—Christopher S. Mooring—Conference of 1826—Revival on James River District—Death of Philip Bruce—Conference of 1827—Progress of the work in Norfolk, Suffolk and other places—Death of Thomas Howard—Conference of 1828—Martin P. Parks—Abram Pena—"Radical Controversy"—Death of Bishop George—Conference of 1829—Conference Missionary Society.

The Conference of 1824 assembled at Petersburg on the 18th of March. Bishop George presided; twelve preachers were received on trial; four were dropped; six were reädmitted; four were elected to Deacon's and eight to Elder's orders; seven local preachers were admitted to the Deaconate, and eight to the Eldership; seven located. The report of the Conference Stewards showed the following amounts received from the sources indicated: Collected from the Circuits and Stations, $238; Cent Collection, $129; from the Book Concern, $300; from the Chartered Fund, $110; public collection at Conference, $70.

The dividend made to the claimants was 68 per cent.

The following resolution, offered by Lewis Skidmore, was adopted:

"*Resolved*, That we highly disapprove of any young man on trial among us taking any step towards marriage, before he shall have obtained respectable standing in the ministry, at least the office of a Deacon; and this Conference would be pleased if young men would defer all matters of courtship until a year or two after they shall have been ordained Deacons. And this Conference will drop any young man who shall violate the above resolution."

The following were elected delegates to the General Conference: Ethelbert Drake, Lewis Skidmore, Benjamin Devany, Caleb Leach, Henry Holmes, William Compton, Hezekiah G. Leigh, and John C. Ballew.

David Payne, of Richmond, a free man of color, was at this Conference graduated to the office of a Deacon. This, we believe, is the first instance on record of the election of a colored person to orders by the Virginia Conference. Payne was a pious, intelligent and useful man; some years subsequent to his ordination, he went to Liberia as a missionary, and after a brief period of useful labor in that new field, he fell at his post and entered into rest.

The year following this Conference was a memorable one on many of the Virginia circuits. In Columbia circuit, lying partially in the counties of Goochland, Louisa, Albemarle and Fluvanna, there was an extraordinary visitation of the Holy Spirit. The minister, James Avis, was a man full of faith and holy zeal. His preaching was attended with immediate and powerful results. The churches were quickened into new life under his powerful appeals,

and sinners were smitten by hundreds wherever he preached. Between three and four hundred were added to the Church during the year. Avis labored as if he felt that he was finishing his work in the vineyard; and it proved the last but most glorious year of his ministry. Seized with a fever in the midst of the revival, the young herald of the Cross ceased at once to work and live. He had been only five years in the work, but in that short time the souls he had won to Christ were counted by hundreds. James Avis was a burning and a shining light.

In the Valley of Virginia there were gracious revivals. Rockingham circuit was specially favored with showers of grace; and at the close of the year an addition of one hundred souls had been made to the Church.

The General Conference met on the 1st of May of this year in the city of Baltimore.

In response to a request made by the preceding General Conference to the British Conference for the establishment of personal intercourse between the two great branches of Methodism, Rev. Richard Reece and Rev. John Hannah were present as representatives of the English Methodists. Their presence was peculiarly gratifying, as there had been no personal intercourse between the two bodies since the last visit of Dr. Coke in 1804.

Among the questions that engaged the attention of the Conference the subject of lay delegation occupied a prominent place. A number of memorials and petitions were sent up by local preachers and lay members, praying that they might be granted the right of

a voice in the legislative department of the Church; these were referred to a committee who reported adversely to the petitioners. They declared the proposed change to be inexpedient.

"1. Because it would create a distinction of interests between the itinerancy and the membership of the Church.

"2. Because it pre-supposes that either the authority of the General Conference 'to make rules and regulations' for the Church, or the manner in which this authority has been exercised is displeasing to the Church, the reverse of which we believe to be true.

"3. Because it would involve a tedious procedure, inconvenient in itself, and calculated to agitate the Church to her injury.

"4. Because it would give to those districts which are conveniently situated, and could therefore secure the attendance of their delegates, an undue influence in the government of the Church."

The report on Education showed that some progress had been made in this department. Under the advice of the preceding Conference, that each Annual Conference should establish a seminary of learning within its bounds, three or four flourishing schools of a high grade had been founded. The Annual Conferences were urged to use their utmost exertions to establish seminaries of learning.

The Missionary Report was greatly encouraging when we consider the small means then at the command of the Church; the missions among the Indians had been generally successful, and the Confer-

ence resolved "to prosecute them with increased vigor."

The American Colonization Society laid its claims before the Conference, and it was resolved "that, whenever the funds of the Missionary Society will justify the measure, the Bishops shall select and send missionaries to the colony of Liberia."

The action of the General Conference of 1820, on the Presiding Elder question, was again suspended.

Two new Bishops were elected, Joshua Soule and Elijah Hedding.

The Conference seemed to feel very deeply the need of more faithful pastoral work on the part of the preachers, and directed that "the superintending preachers so lay out their work that there may be sufficient time allowed each preacher for the faithful and extensive discharge of all his pastoral duties, in promoting family religion and instructing the children."

The Virginia Conference for 1825 met at Oxford, North Carolina, on the 24th of February. Bishop Soule presided; eight preachers were received on trial; two were readmitted; four were dropped; four were admitted to Deacon's, and four to Elder's orders; one was expelled; six local preachers were ordained Deacons, and one was ordained Elder; $80 were received from the Chartered Fund; $150 from the Book Concern. There is no mention of any amount from the circuits.

The Conference carefully guarded the door of entrance to the orders of the ministry. Several local preachers were refused ordination at this session; one

"for disaffection to our government;" "another for want of ability and good report among his neighbors;" and a third "for want of ability."

This shows the necessity for careful scrutiny of all applicants in the Quarterly Conference, which is the proper body to determine whether a licentiate should be raised to the orders of the Christian ministry by the Annual Conferences.

In the Minutes of this session we find the following: "After some discussion on the recommendation of the General Conference, 'That each Annual Conference establish a seminary of learning under its own regulations and patronage,' a motion was made to refer the subject to a committee of twelve, to consist of six members of the Conference, the balance, local preachers or laymen of our Church, to consider and report the best method of establishing such a seminary with suitable constitutional principles; which motion prevailed, and the following persons were elected to compose the committee: John Early, Hezekiah G. Leigh, Caleb Leach, Charles A. Cooley, William Compton and George M. Anderson, of the Conference; Gabriel P. Disosway Joseph B. Littlejohn, John Nutall, Lewis Taylor, Joseph Taylor and Jesse H. Cobb, of the laity."

This committee, it appears, reported on the subject, but the report has not been found. The entry in the Journal is only this: "The College bill, which was laid on the table, was taken up, and, after some amendments, it was adopted."

Randolph Macon College was the result of this novement.

The earliest action of the Conference on the subject of Colonization of the Blacks was taken at this Session. "A communication was received from the Rev. William McKenny, Agent for the American Colonization Society, soliciting the patronage of the Conference towards that institution, when, on motion, it was resolved that the Virginia Conference highly approve the objects of the American Colonization Society, and recommend it to the patronage of the people of their charge."

The following appears as the first recorded action of the Conference in reference to Missions and Missionary Societies: "The Conference Missionary Agent is required to superintend in person, or by proxy, the formaton of branch societies in the bounds of the Conference, to communicate with and stimulate the societies already formed. To make collections for missionary purposes whenever it is practicable; to employ suitable missionaries whenever it is in his power to employ them on proper missionary ground, and to report to the next Conference his success, and the condition of the missionary cause in its bounds."

The partial records that have been preserved give most interesting accounts of the gracious revival which prevailed during this year on many of the circuits. The work in Rockingham was greater than that of the past year. Good meetings were held in the early part of the Spring, and there were a few conversions. On the 1st of August a camp-meeting began at Taylors' Springs, where they had been held successively for ten years; this was the last to be held on that consecrated ground. The meeting was greatly suc-

cessful; forty-six persons were converted and the members were greatly revived. The flame of revival gradually spread to almost every part of the circuit. In the Fall the gracious work was very powerful. At the ordinary prayer meetings the happiest scenes were witnessed; saints rejoiced in God, while penitents laid hold on Christ and exulted in the new life of faith. At Spring Creek Church one hundred united in church fellowship, among whom were many of great influence in the community. Not a few rejoiced during this revival in the possession of "perfect love."

A most extraordinary work broke out this year on the Hanover circuit, under the ministry of Rev. Robert Wilkerson and Rev. William S. Peyton. The work began early in the Spring, and gradually spread all over the circuit. The people were so generally and so powerfully impressed that at the regular appointments, on week days, as well as on the Sabbath, there were many awakenings and conversions. At King's Chapel, in May, there was a powerful revival. At Rowzie's Chapel, in June, the manifestations of Divine power were most glorious. "It is believed," says an eye-witness, "that one hundred sinners were cut to the heart, and about twenty found peace." The work prospered in the neighborhood, and at every meeting sinners were converted. To us the conviction of a hundred sinners and the conversion of twenty, may seem disproportionate, but we must bear in mind that there was no such protracted effort as we are accustomed to in the present day;

then the meeting was seldom protracted beyond two days and often but one day could be spent in a neighborhood; it was, therefore, a great work to behold in one day a hundred sinners convicted, and to hear the shouts of a score of happy converts.

At a Camp Meeting at King's Chapel, in August, after the first sermon, the work broke out with power. Vast numbers attended, and on Sunday it was supposed that there were five thousand people on the ground. "Every sermon and exhortation seemed to be clothed with Divine energy. Sinners were seen weeping, and heard crying and praying in almost every direction; and after the second day the converting power of God was so gloriously displayed that we had not time to rejoice with one soul before our ears would be saluted with the shouts of another having found the same blessing. On Tuesday evening it was thought that about twenty souls were happily converted in fifteen minutes. Such a time we had never before seen.

"Hundreds of believers were shouting at the same moment; mourners crying; young converts rejoicing, and the most awful sense of God's presence seemed to pervade the whole congregation. Some were so alarmed as to leave the encampment, and those who were unwilling for their families to be converted, exerted themselves to get them off the camp ground."

The meeting closed on the 6th day, and the number of converts was one hundred and twenty. "Many who came to this meeting with strong prejudices against Camp Meetings were cured of them entirely; persecutors have become friends—and hundreds will

praise God in eternity that they ever visited this consecrated ground." The number of converts on the circuit during the year was above three hundred.

Gracious and fruitful revivals prevailed during the year in many other places. Princess Ann, Gloucester, Amherst, Lynchburg, Petersburg and Richmond, were specially blessed with abundant showers of grace. On Greensville circuit, under the labors of Rev. John Panabaker, a devout and most useful man, more than three hundred souls were converted.

The Conference lost this year two faithful laborers. Samuel Hunter was born in the State of Maryland. He was converted in 1809, and in 1811 received on trial in the Virginia Conference. He labored on various circuits until 1818, when failing health obliged him to locate. The next year he was reädmitted, and travelled until 1823, when he became superannuated, and so remained to the close of his life. He died full of hope on the 23d of November, 1825. He was a plain, sound and doctrinal preacher. His name is held in grateful remembrance by many whom he led to Christ.

Christopher S. Mooring this year closed a long and useful career, and entered on the reward of the just. He was born in Surry county, Virginia, in 1767. In 1789 he was admitted into the travelling ministry. "During thirty-six years," say his brethren in their notice of him, "of public labor he abode in God, and was made an instrument of great good to the souls of men. In his last sickness, patience and submission to God were conspicuous. Although at times powerfully assailed by temptations, his confidence in

God remained unshaken, and his peace flowed as a river. As he approached his end he exclaimed to a friend: 'I am getting near to my long home. O for submission, submission, resignation, resignation! I have felt restless, but that restlessness is now measurably gone.' On the 30th of September he fell asleep in Jesus. He was distinguished for his meekness and quietness of spirit, and for his gravity and fidelity in his Master's cause. Hundreds, by his instrumentality, were brought to God, who will be his crown of rejoicing in the last day."

The Conference of 1826 began at Portsmouth on the 15th of February. Bishops McKendree and Soule were present. Eleven were received on trial; three were readmitted; five were dropped; ten were elected to Deacon's, and five to Elder's orders; three were returned superannuated; two as supernumeraries; nine located; one was expelled; three local preachers were admitted to Deacon's orders; $90 were received from the Chartered Fund, and $150 from the Book Concern.

The following were added to the "College Committee:" George W. Charlton and James Smith, of the Conference, and Robert Armistead, Arthur Cooper and Jesse Nicholson, local preachers; and Peter Herbert and Cary Jennings, laymen.

Out of eleven local preachers who applied for ordination eight were rejected for want of ability and other causes. Several were found to be disaffected towards the government of the Church, showing that the spirit of Radicalism, as it was called, was at work.

"The committee appointed to consider the best

means, and report the most suitable constitutional principles for establishing a seminary of learning within the bounds of this Conference, made their report, which was laid upon the table;" afterwards "the College bill was taken up, and after some amendments, was adopted; and H. G. Leigh, George W. Charlton, James Smith, John Early, and Thomas Crowder, E. Drake, G. P. Disosway, Robt. A. Armistead, William Clarke, and John C. Pegram, were appointed the select committee recommended in the report of the College committee." The report of the College committee we have not been able to find.

We have the following action in reference to the publication of a Church paper:

"*Resolved*, That this Conference recommend to the agents of our Book Concern at New York to adopt measures for the publication of a weekly paper from our own press, as soon as they can conveniently make arrangements therefor; and that this Conference will use its influence to promote the circulation of the said paper."

This, with the action of other Conferences, gave rise to the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, for many years the leading paper of the Church.

We have been able to glean from the various records of the Church, only imperfect accounts of the success which attended Methodism in the State during the present year. It is to be deeply regretted that so few memorials of the trials and triumphs of our fathers have been preserved.

There was a great revival in the city of Richmond.

A participant in the blessed scenes writes: "I can truly say we have had a most glorious revival among us—such as has never before been witnessed by the oldest inhabitant here. Many have been converted to God, many more are truly awakened, and are inquiring what they shall do to be saved. Old professors are greatly quickened, and there is a manifest struggling for perfect love or sanctification of soul. The signs of this good work began to appear about the first of September, since which time (it is now January,) upwards of 130 white persons have been converted; 105 have been added to the Church."

On the James River district, under the labors of Rev. Lewis Skidmore, Presiding Elder, and his corps of preachers, the work was general and powerful. Near the close of the year Mr. Skidmore wrote: "The Lord of Hosts has been with us, and the Master of Assemblies in our midst. His strong arm has been made bare, and the fortifications of wickedness have been awfully shaken. Our congregations have been large and attentive, and our ministers have acquitted themselves like workmen that need not be ashamed. The variety of talent, so happily adapted to the variety of hearers and congregations, has been followed in a good degree by the expected happy results. Some with the deep and acute reasoning of a learned Paul, have reduced to silence the clamorous reasoners of this world; some with a courageous Peter have gone with dauntless step to Sinai's smoking brow, and with intrepid arm have seized and hurled with might and skill the reddened bolt among the

gazing crowd; and others, Apollos like, with strains sweet and soft as the notes of David's harp, have softened down the multitude to tears. Thus have we seen the men of God preaching the everlasting gospel, with a blazing torch just lighted from the divine altar, until scores of stubborn foes have been brought to bow at the foot of the bleeding Cross. Here have we met with them, mingled the sympathizing tear, joined the fervent prayer, and sung the mourner's song until the tree of life has been shaken and dropped the soul-restoring fruit among them; and hundreds have eaten thereof and rejoiced in ecstasies to them unknown before. Hundreds of us are shouting, 'Glory to God on high, peace on earth, and good will to all men!'"

Rev. William A. Smith says of a revival on Amherst circuit: "Two hundred and ninety-three have been received as probationers during this revival. This work has not been confined to any particular sex or condition. Parents and children, masters and servants, have alike participated."

In the town of Fredericksburg a gracious season blessed the Church, sinners returned to Christ, and his people rejoiced greatly in the success of the word.

Nor was the gospel less powerful in subduing the rough natures of the hardy mountaineers. In Bath and the adjacent counties Methodism gained many fresh victories. Rev. J. B. Crist was sent by his Presiding Elder to form a new circuit in Bath county, when Methodism scarcely existed except in name. "I commenced the work," he says, "with fear, but not without hope, by travelling through the country

making my appointments as I went, preaching, at first, sometimes to only seven or eight persons in places where Methodist preachers had never been before." In a short time several societies were formed, and at the close of the year this new field was secured as a two weeks' circuit. In the adjoining counties the work prospered greatly. Within the limits of Bottetourt and Greenbrier circuits five hundred members were added to the Church. The camp-meetings were scenes of great interest, not without abundant fruit, and the increase on the District was not less than a thousand souls.

The oldest and one of the most useful and eminent members of the Virginia Conference entered this year upon the heavenly rest. Philip Bruce died on the 10th of May at the residence of his brother, Joel Bruce, in Giles county, Tennessee.

Not long before his death a communication was received from him by the Virginia Conference in reply to an official request from that body that he would visit them again, and permit his sons in the gospel to look once more on his venerable form. "Many affections," said this aged servant of Christ, "bind me to the Virginia Conference. Your expressions of goodwill have awakened the tenderest friendships of my soul; but it is very probable that I shall never see you again, for though in my zeal I sometimes try to preach, my preaching is like old Priam's dart, thrown by an arm enfeebled by age. Indeed, my work is well nigh done, and I am waiting in glorious expectation for my change to come, for I have not labored and suffered in vain, nor followed a cunningly devised fable."

"He died," says one of his attendants, "not only in peace, but in triumph. He was perfectly resigned, and said he never had such clear views in his life. For a whole night he could not sleep for joy, and the Lord was with him and blessed him mightily." "I wrote his will," says Dr. Taylor, "and after travelling about fifty-two years his property amounted in value to $300. He was among the very few ministers with whom I have been acquainted whose every word and action evinced a sanctified heart. In him the Wesleyan plan of itinerancy was exemplified. He was the courteous, affable gentleman, and the exemplary, dignified Christian minister,—in language plain, and plain in manners." At the time of his death he was the oldest travelling preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church, except Rev. Freeborn Garrettson.

In commemoration of his long and faithful services, and as a testimonial of their love and veneration, the Virginia Conference erected a suitable monument over his grave.

The Conference for 1827 was held at Petersburg, and began on the 15th of February. Bishops McKendree, Roberts and Soule were present. Eleven were received on trial; one was dropped; three were re-admitted; five located; two were superannuated; one was placed on the supernumerary list; seven were elected Deacons and five Elders; nine local preachers were ordained Deacons; and two ordained Elders. The amount of funds reported as received was, from the Book Concern $200; from the Chartered Fund $90. There is no mention of circuit collections, though

they were doubtless made and reported to the Conference.

We find the following action in reference to the College: "The committee appointed last Conference to prepare a constitution for the government of the contemplated college, in accordance with certain constitutional principles set forth in a report of the committee at the last Conference, reported a constitution, which, after some amendments, was adopted;" and it was further "resolved that every member of this Conference take a subscription paper and use his influence and best exertions to obtain subscriptions for the benefit of the college contemplated to be founded within the bounds of this Conference."

Bishop McKendree addressed the Conference, "expressing his gratitude for the restoration of his health, in answer to many prayers, and for the increase of the numbers and labors of the preachers, and their success in the bounds of our Conference the past year; and concluded with an exhortation to holiness and to diligence in our labors as missionaries among the poor, our colored population, in catechising the rising generation, and in promoting missionary purposes generally, Sunday Schools, &c.

"Upon the conclusion of the Bishop's address, the following resolutions were adopted unanimously:

"1. *Resolved*, That Friday, the 2nd of March next, be observed as a day of fasting and thanksgiving to Almighty God for His mercy in sparing and preserving the life and health of our Superintendent, Bishop McKendree.

"2. *Resolved*, That the doctrine of holiness recom-

mended by our Discipline, and forcibly impressed in the address of Bishop McKendree, be duly weighed and enforced by the members of this Conference.

"3. *Resolved*, That this Conference engage more heartily in the missionary cause, and observe more particularly and fully the business of Sunday Schools and Tract Societies."

We find the following in the Minutes: "Bishop Soule asked for and obtained leave of absence for the balance of the session"; so it seems the Bishop thought he could not leave but by the consent of the Conference.

"The Conference ordered that every preacher take up a collection on the Fourth of July in aid of the Colonization Society"; also, "that we discountenance by precept and example the pernicious and too common practice of buying or dealing in lottery tickets."

The preachers went from the Conference to their fields of ministerial toil in the spirit of their mission. The blessed fruit of their prayers and preaching soon appeared. In the lower portion of the State the work of salvation began and progressed with power. Early in the year Rev. Joseph Carson wrote from Norfolk: "I arrived in this station on the 8th of March, and commenced my labors, I trust, with an eye single to the glory of God—determining to know nothing and preach nothing but Christ crucified. In a short time it became manifest that my feeble labors were not to be in vain. Many were awakened to a sense of their condition, and began to inquire what they must do to be saved. With many their conviction for sin was so

powerful that their own houses became houses of prayer for the distressed, and several were converted in their own dwellings." The result of this meeting was one hundred and forty-two conversions; ninety-two whites and forty-two colored members were added to the church.

The venerable Allen Bernard has favored us with his reminiscences of the work on the Norfolk District.

He writes: "1827 was a memorable year in all this region; a revival broke out in Suffolk in the month of May which extended its happy influences far and wide. Rev. B. Devany had been succeeded in the Presiding Elder's office by Rev. Henry Holmes. In the early part of May we appointed a meeting to be held for two days in the town of Suffolk, with the hope of excellent ministerial help. We met on Saturday at the church, and many felt depressed at the failure of a leading minister to attend the meeting. We all felt that we must look directly to God for help. At the close of the morning services the proposition was made that special prayer should be made three times that afternoon for help from on high—they were times of prayer. We met again at night, but nothing occurred of unusual interest; the next morning we met at nine o'clock for a sacramental meeting; at the close of the services penitents were invited, and one came forward and was powerfully converted. Her joy and zeal in the cause made a deep impression on others, and during the day we had an increase of penitents. Though the number of converts was small, we felt that much had been gained in the powerful

religious impressions that had been made on the community. Here commenced a gracious revival in Suffolk. A few weeks later we held a camp-meeting at Jolliff's meeting house, in Norfolk county; here the power of God was displayed in the awakening and conversion of sinners, among whom were several from Suffolk. Several weeks later we held another camp-meeting at Benns' camp-ground, in Isle of Wight county; here we realized the presence and power of God. We had several very good and zealous laborers at this meeting, among whom may be named Revs. Henry Holmes, B. Devany, James Morrison, William J. Waller, William McKenney, Dr. C. Finny and Gabriel P. Disosway. This was a time of great power, and many found peace in believing, among whom were several residents of Suffolk, and others from that place were deeply impressed on the subject of religion.

"The work now went on gloriously in Suffolk, Smithfield and the adjacent neighborhoods. When we were about to close a meeting in Suffolk one evening a brother Baker came to us and said, he wished we would hold a camp-meeting in his neighborhood. I told him if he would make the necessary arrangements, we would do so. In a day or two he returned and said that a most excellent site for the meeting had been secured. On the first day of this meeting the work broke out with unusual power. The Spirit was with us to give effect to the word preached. Rev. Daniel Hall, a veteran of the cross, was present; he had been the Presiding Elder on the District in 1803, and held the great camp-meeting near Suffolk, at

Smith's Mill Dr. William J. Waller preached with great zeal and success; indeed, preachers and people were in the spirit of the work; the ground was felt to be holy, groups of persons would arrive, and approaching the entrance to the ground would be jesting and trifling, but on entering, seemed to be awed into reverence, and would soon be among the penitents.

"I was at a camp-meeting in 1816, on Tangier Island, where 500 souls were supposed to have been converted; but this meeting at Williams' camp-ground exceeded any that I had ever attended in its gracious results. We have never been able to ascertain the exact number that professed religion at this meeting, but the fruits of it are seen among us to the present day. Some of the most influential people of Suffolk were converted there, and afterward joined our church."

The revival influence extended from this great meeting into the adjoining circuits, and hundreds were brought to Christ. In Gates county and in Murfreesboro', Edenton and Elizabeth City, North Carolina, in Surry, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and in Norfolk city and county, the work was very gracious and powerful. Other churches besides the Methodist shared in this spiritual harvest, and all the branches of Christ's Kingdom were more fully established in the faith.

In the Northern Neck of Virginia there were many blessed scenes. In Westmoreland circuit one hundred and forty were added to the church, and the in-

crease was probably as great in other fields in that section of the State.

From the Richmond district, Rev. Lewis Skidmore again sent forth a cheering letter to the churches. "From our best calculations," he writes under date of December 28th, "since the first of April, about 2,500 immortal souls have escaped from the ways of destruction to the embraces and the heavenly protection of divine mercy. Of that number we rejoice to say that about 1,900 have become members of our church, and heart and hand are journeying with us to the promised land."

The success of Methodism in the mountainous portions of the State within the limits of the Baltimore Conference was also very encouraging. In Christiansburg circuit there was a fine religious influence pervading the community, and the year closed with an increase of one hundred and forty members. In this beautiful section of the State, Methodism has retained its influence and power to the present day. The field, at first so unpromising, has been well cultivated by the preachers of the Baltimore Conference, and there the ripest and richest harvests have been gathered and garnered.

While the preachers of the Virginia Conference rejoiced in the success of the word preached, they were saddened by the sudden and violent death of one of their best and most useful members. Rev. Thomas Howard was a native of Gloucester county. He was of a pious family, and gave his heart to God in his youth. In 1819 he was admitted on trial and soon became a most useful minister. He rose rapidly in

the confidence and affection of his brethren, and gave promise of many years of useful toil to the church. But alas! how dark and mysterious are the movements of Providence. In the midst of his days, and in the full tide of success as a Christian laborer, this good man was cut down by a sudden stroke. "On his way from the Conference of 1827, he was overtaken by a tremendous storm, and, it is supposed, was thrown from his carriage, as he informed the people who found him that he had been entangled in the reins of his horse. His face was much stained with blood, and such were the bruises he received that he survived but a short time. He died in great peace. He was a gifted preacher, impressive and searching in his appeals to the conscience, and eminently useful to the church.

The Conference of 1828 met at Raleigh, North Carolina on the 27th of February. Bishop Soule presided. Twenty-three were received on trial; three were re-admitted; one was dropped; six located; two were placed on the supernumerary, and one on the superannuated list; nine were elected to Deacon's, and eight to Elder's orders; four had died; fourteen local preachers were ordained Deacons, and two were ordained Elders; $90 were received from the Chartered Fund, and $200 from the Book Concern; there is no record of circuit collections.

The following resolution, offered by Rev. Lewis Skidmore, was adopted:

"Whereas, there are certain resolutions in reference to making Presiding Elders elective by the Annual Conferences, now suspended as unfinished busi-

ness by the General Conference ; and whereas, those resolutions are, in the opinion of this Conference, unconstitutional and impolitic,

"*Resolved*, Therefore, by this Conference, that the delegates who shall be elected by this Conference to the next General Conference to be held in Pittsburg May 1, 1828, be and hereby are instructed to vote against the passage of said resolutions into a rule, and against the passage of any other resolutions having the same object with the suspended resolutions ; and they are further instructed to use all prudent means to prevent any innovation in our Methodist Episcopal form of Church Government."

The Conference adopted the following, presented by Rev. Daniel Hall :

"Whereas, it appears from communications made from our African brethren in Liberia, that they have resolved to be united under the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Africa, and to abide by the rules and discipline of the General Conference in America, and have earnestly requested that a missionary may be sent out to Liberia ; therefore,

Resolved, That this Conference approve and recommend the appointment of a missionary to the said colony in Africa as early as, in the judgment of the managers of the Missionary Society, and the Superintendents, it may be practicable."

The following action was had on the "College Question" :

"On motion a committee of seven was appointed—First, to see that all the Presiding Elders, and through them, the preachers of the circuits and stations pay a

due and diligent attention to every regulation and matter appertaining to the establishment of the col lege contemplated; secondly, that they be authorized, if they can, judiciously to employ an efficient agent to make collections and obtain subscriptions for the same;—thirdly, that they maturely consider the advantages of every place proposed for its site and report officially thereon to the next Virginia Conference, upon which the locating of the college shall be fixed." This committee consisted of H. G. Leigh, Daniel Hall, Lewis Skidmore, W. I. Waller, Moses Brock, John Early and William A. Smith.

It was ordered at this session, "that hereafter at each of our Conferences some member at some time of the Conference be appointed to give in the congregation, in the character of an address or sermon, as he may choose, a general account of the state of the work within the bounds of this Conference."

How long this practice was continued we know not; it is to be regretted that it was not perpetuated. An annual address, or sermon, reviewing the movements of the Church in all her departments during the year, would be of great interest and great benefit both to the preachers and the membership. It is true that we have this to a considerable extent in the reports and returns of the various appointments, but in addition we might have all these presented in the forcible and animated style of a well studied and carefully prepared discourse. The annals of the Church could not be preserved in a more attractive form.

The following refers to an occurrence that has been long credited to Rev. John C. Ballew:

"James W. Dunnahay was charged with horse-whipping a wagoner on the highway; he frankly confessed that, under highly aggravating circumstances, he did so from the impulse of the moment; that he was sensible of his error, and would make any acknowledgements required by his brethren; whereupon it was resolved that the Conference highly disapprove the conduct of brother Dunnahay, but accept his acknowledgment and promises to be more cautious in future."

The Conference, convinced of the importance of circulating the best Church literature among the people, recommended the publication by the Book Agent of the whole of Mr. Wesley's works.

Among the young men received on trial at this Conference, there were several who reached great distinction as ministers of Christ. Those yet among the living are too well known to need a notice in this place; those who have finished their course and entered into rest merit a more perfect exhibition of their lives and labors than can be given in a brief sketch.

There were thousands of eager hearers who thirty years ago listened with delight to the young, zealous, and fascinating Martin P. Parks.

He was born in North Carolina, in 1804, of pious Methodist parents, his father being a local preacher, and his mother a devoted and zealous Christian woman. He selected a military life, and entered the West Point military school in his eighteenth year.

While in this institution he was converted under the preaching of the chaplain, Rev. Mr. McIlvaine. He graduated in the regular course, and entered the army as second-lieutenant of artillery.

The scene of his first efforts, both as a soldier and a preacher, was at Old Point. He remained here fourteen months, and during this time secured license, and preached with great acceptance and marked success to the soldiers and citizens. Feeling his call as a soldier of Christ to be imperious, he laid aside his carnal weapons, and took the panoply of the gospel. He was recommended to the Virginia Conference, and at this session received on trial. With a burning zeal, and a heart full of love for Christ and immortal souls, the young preacher went forth to his appointed work.

His success was very great. Wherever he preached souls were won to Christ. The force and beauty of his language, the fervor of his appeals, and the rapture that kindled in his heart while he preached Christ and him crucified, were at times almost irresistible; his hearers were borne along on the rapid, sparkling current of his eloquence, until the sermon closed amid the cries of stricken sinners, the shouts of believers, and the hallelujahs of the enraptured preacher. It is said that in the brightest days of his ministry it was not uncommon for him to sink exhausted in the pulpit, or on the floor of the altar, overcome, less by the effort of preaching than by the power of divine love.

He continued to preach with popularity and success until the opening of Randolph Macon College,

when he was called to the chair of mathematics in that institution. While in this position he determined to leave the Church of his early choice, and seek another communion. He united with the Protestant Episcopal Church, and after the usual novitiate was again admitted to the orders of the ministry. He served faithfully in his new Church relations; and it is said that the force and fire of his earlier preaching would sometimes break through prescribed forms, and thrill his audience with pure, unstudied strains of eloquence.

Mr. Parks was a man of elegant manners, of genial nature, and rich in those rare endowments that form an agreeable fireside companion. Having suffered much from ill health, his physicians advised a voyage to Europe. It was made in great feebleness, and brought no relief to the invalid. Conscious that his days were rapidly closing, he sailed for his native land, fondly hoping to reach the bosom of his family. His Master had ordered differently; he died on the passage, and all that was mortal of the Christian minister was committed to the keeping of the restless sea.

Abram Penn is a conspicuous and honored name in the Virginia Conference. He was born in the county of Patrick, in the year 1803. When not quite twenty he was married to his first wife, a Miss Reid, of Bedford county. A few months after their marriage, while he was absent at Philadelphia, attending medical lectures, his wife died. This terrible stroke was made the occasion of his awakening. He at once began to seek Christ, gave up the study of medicine, returned home, and, after a powerful struggle of ten

months, found peace in believing, at a Camp Meeting in Henry county. Two years after his conversion he offered himself to the Virginia Conference, and was received on trial. He rose rapidly as a minister, and from his reception until broken down by disease, he exhibited constancy, zeal, and a uniformity and depth of piety seldom manifested. He was eminently successful as a preacher, and enjoyed a popularity almost unbounded. His talents were not of the highest order, yet he possessed a clear, vigorous and comprehensive mind, well stored with valuable information. With a graceful diction, rich imagination, and great zeal and earnestness of manner, he took a high position among the ministers of the church. He was a devoted son of Methodism, an unflinching advocate of her doctrines and rights, of her polity and discipline.

The leading feature of his character was a dauntless, straightforward honesty that needed no disguise for itself, and was impatient of dissimulation and disguise in other men. There was in Dr. Penn a fountain of geniality that made his society peculiarly agreeable, and secured him the ardent attachment of many warm and admiring friends. He suffered much in the later years of life with a most distressing affection of the heart. Many times it brought him to the very gates of death, but he would rally again and go on in the path of duty and toil. At length disease gained the mastery over his noble frame. His work was done, well done, and he laid down to die. His last hours were peaceful and full of hope. In reply to inquiries about his spiritual welfare, he said, "that though his sufferings were almost too great to be

borne, yet he hoped God in His mercy would enable him to bear them, and that he believed His grace would sustain him in the hour of his greatest trial.

According to his faith, so was it unto him. His sun went down in a cloudless sky, not a fear nor doubt marred the calmness of the closing scene. Peacefully, joyfully, he resigned his soul into the hands of his great Creator. A life pious, devoted and useful, was crowned by a death calm, peaceful, triumphant.

The churches in Virginia during this, and several successive years, were greatly disturbed by the "Radical Controversy," as it was called, which sent its agitating influences far and wide through the domain of American Methodism. The points in dispute between the "Reformers" and their opponents are now so generally known as almost to preclude the necessity of a formal statement; but a brief historical review of this movement which, after years of heated and angry disputation, culminated in the establishment of the Methodist Protestant Church, may be naturally expected in a narrative of the progress of Methodism in Virginia.

Long before the General Conference of 1824, two questions of ecclesiastical reform were freely discussed in Methodist circles. One, the Presiding Elder question, was advocated and opposed mostly among the travelling preachers; the other, the question of lay delegation in the General Conference, mainly claimed the attention of the local preachers and lay members. The first of these questions, after several years of strife, was prospectively settled by the suspending action of the General Conferences of 1820

and 1824 ; and in that of the present year was definitively settled, and has not since disturbed the peace of the church.

In 1820 the most zealous of the advocates of lay representation established a paper at Trenton, New Jersey, called the "Wesleyan Repository." It was the organ of the new party, and its columns were usually filled with strictures upon the government of the church, and personal attacks upon her Bishops and chief ministers. With a view to concert of action in pushing forward their measures, a "Union Society" was established in the city of Baltimore, with proper officers—and a committee of correspondence, urging all who agreed with them in opinion to form similar societies throughout the church. The controversy went on with increasing heat until a short time before the meeting of the General Conference of 1824, when a sort of council of the leading disaffected spirits was called in Baltimore to consider and decide upon the nature of an address to that body. In the midst of conflicting views, it was agreed to waive the question of right, and to memorialize the General Conference to grant lay representation on the ground of expediency alone. It was hoped that this measure, if adopted, would allay the feverish excitement and prevent the calamities of a schism. A number of the malcontents, dissatisfied with the memorial because it yielded, or at least waived, the question of right, met in Baltimore during the session of the Conference, and claimed representation "as a natural and social right," declaring that its rejection would be a proof of spiritual despotism unworthy of the character of

christian ministers. Taking this high ground, they at once published proposals for a new organ, bearing the captivating title of "Mutual Rights." The formation of "Union Societies" within the church, and the publication of a paper whose columns teemed with bitter and inflammatory articles against her government and chief ministers, was simply the incorporation of schism within her sacred pale.

The fate of the memorial before the General Conference we have recorded. The right to lay representation was kindly but emphatically denied.

It is not our purpose to trace this movement in its minute details. It went "from bad to worse" until the authority of the church was invoked to protect her against the assailants of her economy and administration. At the Baltimore Conference of 1827, one of the members of that body who had associated himself with the "Reformers," was arraigned for commending and circulating the "Mutual Rights." He avowed such opinions before the Conference, that they requested the Bishop to give him no regular work for one year, regarding this as the mildest sentence they could pass on the erring brother. From this decision he appealed to the General Conference, and not content with this, he assailed his Conference in the columns of the "Mutual Rights." All this helped to widen the breach and hasten the catastrophe. The advocates of reform put forth all their strength. Men who had been honored co-laborers with Asbury, Whatcoat and McKendree, now vied with each other in their efforts to break up that form of church government which these holy men had toiled and suffered

to establish. In the midst of the controversy a defender of the old forms of Methodism entered the lists who dealt the "Reformers" trenchant blows, and reassured the faith of many who had faltered in the midst of the excitement. This writer was Dr. Thomas E. Bond, of Baltimore, long esteemed one of the ablest defenders of Methodism as it came from the fathers. In reply to a publication which appeared about the same time, reflecting most severely on the founders of American Methodism, Rev. John Emory put forth his "Defence of our Fathers," fully vindicating these venerable men from the unjust charges brought against them in the "History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy." Mr. Emory's work was widely circulated and merited, as it secured, the admiration of all the true friends of the church. It so completely established the wisdom and integrity of Asbury and his associates that nothing has since been needed on the questions therein discussed.

Matters at length reached such a crisis that it was deemed necessary to the peace of the church to cite some of the most determined malcontents before the proper ecclesiastical tribunals. The first case occurred in the city of Baltimore, where eleven local preachers, and twenty-five lay members were summoned to appear and answer the charge of "inveigling against our Discipline, speaking evil of our ministers," and of breaking the rule "which prohibits the members of the church from doing harm, and requires them to avoid evil of every kind." The charges were sustained by ample evidence, and the

local preachers were suspended and the laymen ex pelled.

Similar proceedings were held in other places, and quite a number of refractory members were excluded from the church.

The expelled preachers and members in Baltimore, with many others who withdrew from the church, formed an association under the name of "Associated Methodist Reformers." In November, 1827, a Convention, composed of clerical and lay delegates from State Conventions and Union Societies met and prepared a memorial, setting forth their grievances and their demands, which was laid before the ensuing General Conference. It was referred to a committee, and an adverse report drawn up and presented to the Conference from the pen of Mr. Emory, whose familiarity with the whole controversy enabled him to meet all the arguments of the memorialists. With the hope, however, of preventing further strife and separation from the church, the Conference advised that no further proceedings should be had against disaffected ministers or members, and that all who had been expelled should be restored to the church on condition that the "Union Societies" should be abolished and the publication of the "Mutual Rights" discontinued. Very few, if any, of the discontented parties, availed themselves of the benefits of this privilege; on the contrary, after the action of the Conference became known, large numbers left the church in different portions of the country, and gathered under the banners of reform.

In November of the present year (1828) the "As-

sociated Methodist Churches" held a Convention in Baltimore, and organized a provisional government, until a future Convention should prepare a constitution for a proper church organization. The Convention assembled in the same city in November 1830, and was composed of clerical and lay representatives from thirteen Annual Conferences. By this body the "Methodist Protestant Church" was fully organized as another new branch of Methodism.

Although there was much disputation, and many sad divisions in the Virginia churches in reference to the measures of the "Reformers," the field of ministerial toil was not altogether destitute of the refreshing showers of divine grace. In Petersburg, and many other places, gracious revivals prevailed, and the ranks of Methodism greatly strengthened.

The Church was called this year to mourn the loss of the pious and excellent Bishop George. On the 11th of August he reached the town of Staunton, in a feeble and suffering condition, and put up with his friend, Mr. Philip Hopkins. Though evidently ill of dysentery, he manifested no desire to have the services of a physician. Rev. Bassil Barry gives an interesting account of the last sickness of this faithful servant of Christ. "I went once and again to see him, but fearing I might interrupt him, I asked him if it would be agreeable to him for me to remain in the room. He replied, 'If you are not invulnerable to the disease, you had better not remain.' On Thursday, while several of us were sitting by him, he said, 'Brethren, you must excuse me; I am too weak to talk with you; all I can say is, if I die, I am going

to glory—for this I have been living forty years.' On Friday morning he sent for me, and said he was low, and if he died he wished me to be the bearer of a few lines to two persons in Baltimore—not naming them—but they were appointed to transact his business. He then requested me to get his Testament and read the 14th and 15th chapters of Saint John. I did so. He then offered a few reflections on them, and exclaimed, 'What a body of divinity and valuable truths are embraced in these chapters.' I was with him occasionally until the following Monday, during which time nothing special occured. He was much afflicted in body, but calm in mind. His prospects for heaven appeared to fill his soul with glory and peace. Observing that he manifested an unwillingness to take medicine, I said, 'Father George, I do not wish you to die.' 'Why?' said he, 'do you not wish me to go to heaven from Staunton?'

"The disease continued with very little abatement. He complained but little, and frequently said, 'We will try and get into the better country.' On Wednesday he was too weak to ride out; and suffered much with great patience until Thursday evening about 6 o'clock, when he said, 'I now feel a change has taken place.' His friends called in three other physicians, but all to no purpose. The die was cast, and no relief could be afforded, but his mind remained in perfect peace,—glory! glory! was his constant theme.

"To the physicians who came in he said, 'I shall soon be in glory?' To brother Morrison he said, 'Who are these? are they not all ministering spirits?'

and exclaimed, 'My dear departed wife—has been with me, and I shall soon be with her in glory!' On Friday morning he embraced several of the brethren present, and said, 'Brethren, rejoice with me; I am going to glory.' During the day he frequently expressed himself in similar language to brother Berkeley, whose attention was unremitting. He said, 'I am going to glory, that's enough.' Towards the close of the day he said, (clapping his hands) 'Shout glory to God! the best of all is, the Lord is with us.' At night he requested an anodyne, the candles to be removed, and to be left alone. Being asked if he had any temporal business unsettled, he replied, 'Nothing of any magnitude;' and added, as if he had bidden adieu to all earthly concerns, 'I am going to glory. I have been for many years trying to lead others to glory, and now thither am I going. Many other similar expressions fell from his lips, but suffice it to say, 'For me to live,' said he, 'is Christ, and to die is gain. Jesus is sweet.' Glory was his theme in the pulpit; glory was his theme in death, and glory shall be his theme to all eternity."

This was a happy and triumphant close of a life full of faith, and fervor, and ripe gospel fruits. In the Minutes his brethren said of him: "Bishop George was a man of deep piety, of great simplicity of manners, a very pathetic, powerful, and successful preacher, greatly beloved in life, and very extensively lamented in death."

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It was the original design of the author to bring this history to the close of the year 1830, but his

labor upon it was suspended at this point at the outbreak of the late war; and, at the close of the struggle, when Richmond was evacuated, and the disastrous fire occurred, it consumed his library, with all the materials he had collected for the completion of the work. He was fortunate enough to preserve the manuscript, which had been removed from his office, in the burnt district, to his residence, in another part of the city. The two years lost contain but little of special interest, if we except the controversies that prevailed in reference to the schism, which resulted in the organization of the Methodist Protestant Church; and now those controversies had better be forgotten than remembered.

THE END.

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